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Round  
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# ROUND ABOUT HOME



# ROUND ABOUT HOME

IRISH SCENES AND MEMORIES

BY

REV. P. J. CARROLL, C. S. C.

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NOTRE DAME, INDIANA  
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## TO THE READER

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*"Round About Home" is made up of scenes and memories: scenes from places I know; memories of people I love. The quiet country herein described, still remains—the flat land, the white road, the little town, the river, and the hill's crest. The people who appear and speak for a brief period, are grown very old, or gone away.*

*What is written, then, is written as a record of what was, and what, for me, will never be again: to-day's memories of a yesterday, back in Ireland, when the gray dew was on the clover and the cuckoo called from the blossomed alder.*

*Maybe certain scenes and memories here set down will recall to you, also, your springtime in the Old Land, with dear, kindly people all around you, the wide, white Shannon a few flat fields away, and the sea's sweet breath coming from Kerry Head.*

*If so, then is there no need of further dedicating this book. Already it is dedicated to you.*





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## THE WAYS OF FATHER TRACEY

FATHER TRACEY had many and many an offer of a larger and better parish than the out-of-the-world little village of Knockfeen. But he stayed with the simple people he knew and loved, and could never be induced to "go up higher." Every Sunday, at the last Mass, he preached a plain sermon, in which he illustrated his theme from the farm and the crops and the weather, like his Divine Master before him. He was brief or long as he had a mind; but, brief or long, he received the same measured attention. He never scolded or berated; for age had but mellowed and sweetened this man of God, crowned with the silver of seventy years. And it was better so; for he saved more stray sheep by love and gentleness and pity than he could ever have done by the white light of holy wrath.

On Saturday afternoon, from two to six, he heard confessions in an old confessional that was hidden away under the stairs leading to the gallery. When he gave a word of counsel or consolation, he spoke so low the people said 'the ould boy himself couldn't hear, and so couldn't make plans to spoil the good work of his reverence.'

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But when he said, *Ego te absolvo*, he spoke with such unction and authority as if he were chasing money-changers out of the Temple. If there were periods of lull—and usually there were, for the parish was small—he walked out on the grassplot of the “chapel yard” and said his Beads or his Breviary, or stood above the grave of a former Knockfeen parish priest who was laid to rest many long years before. It was the only priest’s grave to which the “yard” could lay claim.

Father Tracey loved his people, and you may be sure his people loved him. Of a week morning after Mass, he took a walk down the village street, and passed a friendly word here and there as he moved leisurely along.

“Well, Maureen, how is your mother this morning?”

“Oh, she’s much better this morning, Father, thank you!”

“I’m glad to hear that, Maureen. You might tell her I’ll drop in to-morrow or maybe Wednesday.”

Then he passed on till he met a young man from the country leading a spirited horse to the forge.

“Good-day, Mike! That’s a fine colt.”

“He is, Father; though he do be a bit wild and foolish sometimes.”

“You don’t tell me! And where did you get him, Mike?”

“I bought him from Tade Clancy.”

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"Tade of the hill?"

"Yes, Father."

Then Father Tracey would stroke the arched neck, and the tossing head would turn; and two large eyes would survey the priest with friendly curiosity.

"He's a great animal, Mike. I suppose he cost you a bit?"

"Faix, then, he did, Father! He cost me seventeen pound ten, a week ago ere yesterday."

"That's big money, Mike. I hope God will make him prosper for you."

Then he might meet a "girleen" on her way to school, and he would stop and ask where her brother was yesterday. Maybe her brother was sick, or maybe he had to help in the garden, or perhaps he had to go to the fair. Then Father Tracey would grow very serious.

"Girleen, listen to me! We'll never be anything in these parts without education. Once upon a time we didn't get the chance, but 'tis different now. Tell your father to let Tommy come to school; for Tommy is a good, bright boy and may be something yet."

The "girleen" promised and passed noiselessly away.

If it were a summer morning, this shepherd of his people, their light and their guide, might leave the village scenes behind him to visit some sick or forlorn member of his flock in the country. On either side of the road, as he wended his way, he saw potato fields glorious in their white blos-

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soms, and men with the bone and sinew of Finn Mac Coul's Fenians giving the furrows a last touch of the spade. Or maybe he stopped to watch the wide acres of clover, where the corn-crakes lay a-hiding, and the smell of the growing meadows was sweeter to his sense than the perfumes of the desert. Or hé might let his eyes wander to the whitewashed house of a farmer, crowned with a new roof of golden thatch. Or he might see men busy following their teams in hayfield or garden, and milch cows drowsing in the shade. Or afar he might hear the river, like a pulse, beating in its ceaseless course, and quickening with life the face of the land.

He lived with his people; their hopes were his hopes, their failures his failures. If the yellow wheat promised only half a harvest, they told him; and he gave, of his large pity, gentle words of encouragement and hope. If a horse or a cow "went against" them, into his heart they poured the story. Especially if death came and took some one from accustomed ways to "ways unknown," he gave the mourners a message of sympathy and hope.

Often, too, in those daily walks he would linger around a great old castle—the memory of a bygone glory—that sent a long shadow of a waning day far across the growing fields. There it stood, with its narrow portholes, and crumbling stone stairway, and dark, echo-making rooms, where the owl and the bat hovered like spirits of evil. The ivy clung fast about it, and knit itself to

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every stone that else might have fallen. And he had his dream there in the shadow of Ireland's crumbling grandeur, just as any one else would who knew her story. He was a patriot, this gentle priest. And who has a greater right to be patriotic than the Irish priesthood? Has it not proved the Spartan band that guarded Thermopylæ against the crowding hosts?

One summer afternoon in late July Father Tracey hovered about this old castle on his way home from a customary visit in the country. He had not been long there when he noticed a man running across the field toward him. Scarcely had he reached the priest when he cried: "Glory be to the great God! There's a man killed, Father! Come quick!"

The priest followed at once. They reached the highroad leading to the village and walked about two hundred yards. Then on the edge of a grove of trees he saw a number of persons surrounding a dead body. Because of its strangeness and its sadness, the story of the accident obtains in the traditions of Southern Ireland.

Jim O'Brien had bought a couple of trees from the owner of the grove, and needed the help of a man and a horse to cut down and take home the timber. Widow Madigan and her son Dan—an only child, born twenty-four years before, shortly after her husband's death—were Jim's neighbors. They were "neighbors" not by location only, but by spirit also, and Jim found little difficulty in securing the assistance of man and horse.



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Dan Madigan was a typical young Irishman. He had eyes as blue as the sky of his motherland, and a head of hair as black as the wing of a night raven. Though he was a strong man, he spoke softly, and his ways were as gentle as a girl's. He never once made trouble for his fellowmen, and his fellowmen never made trouble for him. So his days were spent keeping his farm of forty acres, which were among the finest in the county.

It was no secret, either, that Kathleen O'Donnell, the best girl in all Munster, was to be his own forever the coming Shrove. Father Tracey himself had helped to make the match,—and a good matchmaker he was, too. There was no bargaining, or “splitting the difference.” They met, they liked, they loved—and that was the end of it. Now, if Dan loved Kathleen with the deep love of a good heart, Kathleen in her turn thought Dan the strongest and bravest and fleetest and truest and gentlest boy from Cork to Dublin. So they had their dreams and their plans and their talks; and they built their golden castles on the crests of Irish hills, around which daisied fields stretched wide and far. And Dan's mother, who never had much to say—she was the reserved kind of mother whose love does not effervesce in speech,—held this girl to her heart as a daughter who would soften her age with her gentle ways. So everybody—from Father Tracey, who would bless their wedlock even as he had baptized them, and given them their first Holy



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Communion, and handed them "sacks of sweets" for prizes at school, down to the most critical member of the little parish—considered Dan Madigan and Kathleen O'Donnell the bravest boy and the finest girl one would meet in a hundred miles of a highroad.

When Dan drove down the white road that July day there wasn't a care in his heart. He had a word of salute for everybody. Jim O'Brien remarked as they drove along:

"Dan, 'tis great weather entirely."

"'Great' is the word, Jim. I don't believe I ever saw finer crops."

"Yerra that's right! They're the best in years."

When they reached the little grove, Dan tied the horse, with sufficient leeway to pluck big bunches of luscious grass. Jim mounted one of the trees—a giant with great, outreaching arms. He sawed and sawed on one of the heaviest limbs, then stopped a bit and handed a word down to Dan:

"Dan, he's a tough fellow, so he is!"

"He is that, Jim! Let me up at him."

"No: you come up for the other fellow. He's worse yet."

Then Jim began anew and went on with a will. The story is too full of painful memories to linger over it for paltry dramatic effect. Dan Madigan walked directly under the swaying limb to find out how the work was advancing. There was a crash, and in a second his body was crushed beneath the monster limb.

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Men hurried to the spot and removed the mangled form. And there they were, a silent circle, when Father Tracey arrived. Of course he gave conditional absolution and said the usual prayers. Then the heart of the gentle priest felt a great pang. When he spoke there was something like bitterness in his words:

"Those are the dear trees to all of us. They have put out the life of the finest boy in Ireland."

Then he noticed Jim, the picture of misfortune, hanging on the edge of the group. His heart melted now and he felt a gentle pity.

"Jim, I'm not blaming you. And God doesn't blame you. But he that's gone was the friend of all of you."

And those strong men, rugged from sun and soil, wept, and muttered with deference, "Indeed he was!" and "God knows he was!" and "God be merciful to him!"

One can not tell the great sorrow of the mother at home when Father Tracey broke the terrible news. Like every crushing sorrow, it found no outlet. She looked at the son of her heart, the child that lighted her widowhood of twenty-four years, as he was borne through her door. But no tears relieved the terrible burning heart within her. Then there followed the long watching when she sat by the body and looked at the still face, not caring to eat, not wishing to give up her vigil. At her side, brave in her woe, was the girl that in a sense was a widow too. Father Tracey

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tried his gentlest arts to get the tears of relief to flow, but the tears did not come. The day of the funeral arrived, and then God showed pity. When the body was about to be placed away in the yellow coffin, the mother stopped the bearers and leaned her face down to the cold face of her son.

"Dan, my Dan, child of my heart! And are you going to leave me! Sure you are the light of my eyes and the pulse of my blood, and I can't live without you! Stay, son of mine; or if you don't, may God take me to you soon!"

Then the spring of mother-love burst forth in floods of tears, and the tears brought relief.

Knockpatrick is a graveyard on the crest of a hill, and serves as the last resting-place of all the people of Knockfeen parish. Narrow and winding is the road that leads up to it, and you can see its weather-worn tombs many and many a mile away. Three narrow graves lie side by side in one corner, where two ivy-covered walls meet. One "headstone" keeps watch above them, and chiselled into it are these words: "To the memory of John Madigan, his beloved wife Mary, and their son Daniel."

There is a nun in the convent of the Good Shepherd at Limerick, and her face is sweet and her voice is gentle. She goes about each daily task with quiet cheerfulness, and every beggar calls her the "angel Sister." She felt a great grief once, but the weight of that is lifted by love and holy peace; yet at every Mass she hears

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she prays for the eternal rest of one soul called suddenly away.

. . . . .  
There are two priests' graves in Knockfeen chapel yard now. One died many a long year ago. The other is Father Tracey, who, at the venerable age of eighty years, gave a parting blessing to the people of his heart, and went home to God. Many a mother brings her child to the green plot of grass of a mellow summer day, and in the silence of the place tells to eager ears the story of Father Tracey and his gentle ways.

## THE BLIND MAN OF ATHERY.

A BROAD white road runs from Ardee to Athery. Through both little towns flows the River Deel; and where it divides Athery in two, it is broad and deep; but farther south, where it semicircles Ardee, it is so narrow you could almost jump across, and so shallow you can see the yellow sand and pebbles at the bottom. Athery used to be a thriving town, as towns go in Ireland. Into its small harbor, boats filled with turf and "cots" heavy with seaweed glided with the tide in the gray of the morning. Round about it lived many rich farmers, who sent butter to its markets and cattle and sheep to its fairs. Thither went the women to do their shopping of a Saturday, and the men with their grain to be ground at the mill.

The broad white road was beaten into hardness by constant travel. The well-shod horse made it hard, as he swayed, patiently pulling his heavy load of peat; so did the winking donkey, burdened with his "loadeen" of seaweed that had the pungent odor of the ocean. In the early morning bunches of well-fed cattle, that bellowed for their native hills, passed over it on their last sad

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journey, to be sold to fatten the Saxon; so did flocks of sheep and lambs; so did the milk cars, driven to the creamery by whistling dairy boys; so did shy coleens, with donkey and trap going to the "millinery" to buy new hats or dresses; so did beggars, with small bags of potatoes and odds and ends of all kinds gathered in a foray of charity through the sweet air of the country; so did tinkers, with their procession of lean ponies of a like repute to their masters; so did huxters of many wares; so did the postboy, with his head up in the air, although he was a servant of the government; so, sometimes, did fat, lazy "peelers" in a side-car, to look over the farm of an evicted tenant, and to guard the "emergency man"—for want of something better to do; so did the travelling Jew with a package of linen done up in oilcloth; so did the school-children from the country, with their books held in a strap—when they had enough of them; so, too, in the endless procession, did the Blind Man of Athery and his dog.

Everybody knew the blind man, but not a soul in the whole town or country knew of him. Whence he came, when, why,—these were secrets of the Great Book. He was in town before the oldest inhabitant, and never seemed to have been younger or to have grown older. He was always blind, so far as anybody knew; and was led about by the same dog, that shared the mystery of his master. He was not a handsome dog, either; not such a dog as you would stop to look at,



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nor to waste a kind word on; certainly not a dog to entice you to descend to the familiarity of an encouraging pat on the head. He was scrawny and small and old-fashioned. He never played like other dogs. He never acted like other dogs. He did not pant in the heat, nor did he bark at the footfall of a stranger. His eyes were watery, and blinked so he never could look you in the face. The fact is, he would never look anyhow; for he was always too busy with his own cares to bother about others. He went before his master, who held him by a brass chain, attached to his collar. The chain was always on the verge of being taut, and stayed there. The master walked at a fair pace, and the dog trotted the leisurely trot of a dog who has no special reason to hurry.

Everyday we school-children met them at the same place, at the same time, on the same errand. The place was Stoake's Cross,—so called because years before some one of that name had been killed there; thus does tradition obtain in Ireland. The time was half-past eight in the morning; the errand, to get a bundle of scollops from a wood of hazel saplings that grew about a mile out in the country. These scollops were sold by the blind man to people whose thatched roofs needed renewal or repair. Always he carried a large rosary of brown beads with a large yellow crucifix; and always he was murmuring "Hail Marys" as the little stones passed between his thumb and forefinger in endless procession. Always

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he said, "God save you, children!" as he heard our footfalls nearing him, and always we answered: "And you kindly, sir!" He never paused, but vanished around the bend of the road like a spirit from the other world.

If people knew nothing of the blind man's history, you may be sure they made up by conjecture and gossip and hearsay what they lacked in the way of positive information. Sure it was known he had been a great sinner once upon a time, and had travelled to the end of the world to find a spot where he could do penance; and Athery was the place, with its crumbling castle of the fighting Desmonds, and its ivy-clad abbey that looked down upon the placid river,—the abbey where the monks prayed in the bygone ages, when Ireland was still uncrowned by a great crown of sorrows. Some said he had committed murder and was haunted day and night by the ghost of the man he killed. Others said he had been cursed by a priest because he had answered him back when the priest was speaking from the holy altar.

He was a strange man, too, in his way, like his dog that went before him. He never talked with the neighbors about the weather or the conditions of the crops. He lived his life alone, never visiting a body of an evening, and never asking a body to visit him. He went to Mass every morning and knelt in a quiet corner behind a pillar, holding the big brown beads with the yellow crucifix. He went to confession every Saturday at three



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o'clock; and, as he knelt in his corner after he had told his sins to the keeper of the seal, often and often his blind eyes were wet from weeping. There were those who said he was a miser and had money hoarded away somewhere; but nobody ever tried to make sure, for good luck never yet followed those who pried into the secrets of the blind man. "Let him alone," was the warning of the old to the young. "He is a strange man entirely, and 'tis an evil day for them that'll meddle with him or his affairs."

So the tradition was handed down from the ancients, and the blind man of mystery was allowed to go his way without let or hindrance. There was a story indeed that once a boy interfered with the dog, and the dog bit him, and the boy died howling within an hour, though the best doctor for miles around did all in his power to save him. There were stories of others who came to evil from interfering with the poor sightless man. But they were past and gone, if they ever lived; and the town showed kindness and consideration to the man whose story was as a sealed book.

One morning in mid-April, we were making our regular journey to school. It was the season of what is called the "spring showers." Strange, melancholy, fascinating, showery Irish weather! A patch of black cloud soils the blue of the west and spreads like a cancer over the face of the sky. A low moan of the wind that rises to a dismal roar and tosses every leafing tree and

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shrub. Then a rain that is blown across the country over broad fields, up hills and down valleys for twenty minutes or half an hour. It is all over soon—cloud, wind, rain—and a blue sky and a warm sun look down upon the emerald of Ireland. Thus the cloud and the light come and go for weeks at a stretch, reminding one in figure of the character of the race.

It was one such morning in the period of sun that we hurried on our way to the school that stood on the crest of a little hill overlooking the river. Some of us were talking, some were silent, and a few took a last look at a difficult lesson. We turned the bend in the road, and that which had never been recorded in the memory of living man was to be recorded then. The Blind Man of Athery and the dog that guided him were nowhere to be seen! By a strange coincidence, the long stretch of straight, white road ahead of us was vacant and silent. A mysterious fear took possession of us all, and we grew silent too. We felt that somewhere near us his spirit hovered, and that the man of mystery had made himself invisible and was passing by on his daily journey.

We hurried to the town, where passed from tongue to tongue the news that the blind man was dead. That morning at seven o'clock the postman brought him the only letter ever known to have come to him; and when he entered his cottage, found him lying dead in bed, with his beads twined about his fingers. The dog

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that had been his light and guide for so long sat watching and waiting a few feet away. The postman placed the letter on the bed and ran out to tell the neighbors. In a short time a silent, sympathetic, and perhaps a curious group was in the room. After the first flush of excitement was over, the postman thought of the letter, which he would take to the priest, who might decide to read it, and perhaps solve the mystery. But the letter was gone! They searched and searched, but it was never found, and it is a long time now since people have given up the hope that it ever will be found.

Two days later it was a large gathering that saw the blind man laid away in a little corner of the abbey. It was a dark afternoon outside, and darker still within the ruins. The wind shook the new spring leaves, and moaned dismally through crumbling windows and vacant doors. The priest said the prayers, and the people answered. The earth was heaved upon the yellow coffin; and when the work was done, at the head of the mound was placed a little black iron cross with this inscription: "The Blind Man of Athery is buried here."

The dog followed his master's funeral, and never after left the abbey. Because of the strangeness and sadness and mystery of it all, people sent him food, which the mute animal scarcely touched, though you may be sure the crows devoured it without ceremony. He did not need people's attention for long. Just three weeks after his

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master's burial, he was found dead near the grave, upon which the long grass is growing now, and on which is renewed every three or four years the simple words that tell all that is known and all that will ever be known of the Blind Man of Athery.

## THE PATHERN DAY.

THE twenty-fifth of July was always called "Paternion Day" in the parish of Knockfeen. It took some years to arrive at the truth that "paternion" was a corruption of "patron," and that the day was kept holy in honor of St. James the Greater, to whom the parish chapel was dedicated.

A small mile out from the village was St. James' Well, to which from dawn to sundown people went in unbroken procession to make the "rounds." Over it was built a covering of mortar and stone, that in shape looked not unlike a beehive; while around it a path was worn from the unending procession during the long July day. People counted the rounds on their beads, or sometimes on little stones, one of which they dropped to the grass after each round. Everybody drank some of the clear, cold water, and gave an alms to the beggar woman who reached down for the welcome glassful. As a rule, people made the rounds at St. James' Well only on the feast of the saint; though, of course, there are numerous wells in Ireland where rounds are made every day of the year. It must be

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said, too, that nobody spent the whole day at this form of devotion. Indeed, it would be difficult for the same person to keep marching in the procession all day long.

About four hundred yards down from the rise of ground, out of which sometime in the dim past the cooling waters leaped, was a sloping lawn like that mentioned in Goldsmith's "Deserted Village." There one could see the vision of five or six booths or stands—"tents" they used to be called,—presided over by professional "huxters," who made it a business to be present at all fairs, races, "patherns," and other gatherings of a like character. The stands had two departments—the religious and the worldly. The religious portion contained beads, scapulars, prayer-books, statues, medals, and crucifixes; the worldly contained "sweets," cakes, lemonade, fruit of all kinds, especially plums and gooseberries. Old people came and chose the things of the spirit; children came and chose the things of the world. When the day was waning the old people walked leisurely home, wondering how many more years would be given them "to make the rounds." But the children stayed with their elder brothers and sisters, still feeding on the things of the world, for which they were to suffer later on.

Beyond these tents was the "Maggie man," who conducted a tournament of skill in wattle throwing. The sport consisted of two well-padded sticks driven into the ground, on which were placed two wooden targets resembling bottles.



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Every young man desiring to take a turn was given three throws at either of the targets for a penny. For every one knocked down, three more throws were granted, so that a man with a good aim might keep on throwing all day. The "Maggie man" had four specific duties: to collect and bring back the sticks after they had been thrown; to replace the targets; to call out continuously, "Three throws for a penny!" and to keep beyond reach of the flying missiles. It was a simple sport enough, no doubt; but the grown men and the growing boys of Knockfeen found it most enjoyable.

After all, amusement is relative. Simple people have simple joys. The boy with a kite is probably happier than the millionaire with a yacht. He has the same sky above him, and his young eyes can watch the rift for a stretch of blue; he has youth, and hope; he is on the east side of life, with all the promise of the west before him. The man of money has comfort and ease and the material good things of earth. But earth's treasures gather rust with time, and earth's joys are always on the borderland of sorrow.

Late one Patherne afternoon Father Tracey walked out from the village to share by observation in the pleasures of his simple people.

"Himself is comin'!" an old lady, who still lingered, whispered to a neighbor.

"Wisha glory be to God, an' he never misses! An' faix 'tis aisly plased he is, comin' out here to the likes of us."

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"Whist, woman! Hasn't he been comin' here for thirty years, and won't he come till he die?"

"He will,—of course he will. And may the Blessed Mother herself keep him comin' a good while yet!"

Meantime one of the children, having seen the familiar figure walking down the road, gave the welcome word. It is not any picture of fancy to say that every child in the place rushed with a leaping heart to meet the sweet, kindly priest. They clapped their hands, fluttered around him like birds, and laughed in hysterical joy. One knows not how, but this man of silvered hair had the heart of every child in the hollow of his hand. When he appeared, father, mother, brother, sister, everybody on the whole round earth was set aside; when he left, a cloud settled on their young faces.

He set them racing for pennies till his coppers were all gone. Then Maureen sang "Ninety-Eight" for him; and the fire of her race leaped out of her eyes, and the red blood of her heart rushed to her face in defiance as the words brought meaning to her young mind. There was a lad he called "Laughing Fox," because he could never look at you without breaking into a smile, and because his hair was as red as the fur of a fox. Father Tracey had him speak a little piece about 'Jacky the Lantern' and his wild pranks, which an old man in the parish had taught him. There were two lines which never failed to make Father Tracey laugh and clap his hands and



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say, "Bravo, bravo, 'Laughing Fox'!" The lines ran:

For Jacky could make the divil go wrong,  
But the divil went wrong before him.

There was a little girl he called "Erin." She had long, black hair that always flew back in the wind; and her face was strangely serious, and her eyes full of expression. One day when he visited the school he asked her to read for him. The selection began, "Erin, the light will shine out of thine eyes"; and ever after he called her "Erin." When the children had sung and spoken and run themselves tired, he watched the men for a little, chatting here and there, and commenting on the good or ill luck of the stick-throwers.

Donald O'Neill, one of the finest hurlers in County Limerick, stepped up for a turn. The "Maggie man" put him off and told him to wait a bit; for he knew, as everybody else knew, that Donald could, without effort, knock down four bottles out of every six throws.

"Let Donald take a turn," Father Tracey said, as he heard the old man warding him off.

"Sure, your reverence, he's too good entirely, and 'tis tired he makes me gathering up the sticks for him. A man must make a living, your reverence. And Donald O'Neill might keep throwing from now till Christmas for a pinny."

"Yes, Donald is a great boy," Father Tracey added reflectively. "Sure, I baptized him and his father and mother before him, and I ought

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to know. Come over here to me, Donald."

Then Father Tracey placed his fatherly hand on the young head, crowned with a growth of fair, soft hair; and he looked with the pride of spiritual fatherhood into the eyes that were gentle and full of light. Father Tracey had an ever-widening love for all his people, young and old. But because Donald served his Mass for eleven years, and rang the chapel bell, and took care of his horse when he had one, and hovered about him morning, noon and night, for this lad the priest had the most tender affection. Donald was handsome like his father and mother before him. Many a girl would be glad to say "Yes" if he asked her, but 'twas known he was taking Latin lessons with Father Tracey and might be a priest; so they put the thought of him out of their young heads.

The priest and Donald left the "Maggie man" to "make a living," as he put it, and stood on a rise of ground near the edge of the crowd.

"Well, Donald my lad, are you still thinking it over?"

"Indeed I am, Father, day and night. I know how my mother has her heart set on my staying here at home. My father won't like it either. But always the voice is calling me to foreign parts. I have prayed and prayed, and the voice keeps calling, calling,—something like the voice of the Irish calling St. Patrick long ago. I'm thinking to still the voice and ease my heart by joining the Franciscans for the foreign missions."

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"Donald my lad, I'm forty-seven years a priest, and never yet have I stilled the voice in the heart of any one; and I never will, God helping me with His holy grace. I was thinking, since your father is well-to-do, you might go to Maynooth and join the priesthood of your own country. But who am I that I should lay plans for a boy when the voice of the great God is calling him?" Then Father Tracey's eyes filled with tears: "Donald, Donald, you are a good lad, and your young face shows it, and so does the light of your eyes. You have lingered around your poor old priest when his thoughts and his ways were so different from yours. You have cheered him when his heart was heavy with sorrow; you have helped him when age had fettered his feet. And I love you, Donald, as only a father could. And God loves you, Donald. Therefore follow Him, even if your father and mother gainsay you; for we must leave father and mother and follow Him. Yes, although I'll miss you many and many a day, and will hear no more the voice that sings in you, still go, Donald, when you are ready; and my blessing and the blessing of God go with you."

Father Tracey left the "Patern" shortly after, thoughtful and silent. The sun was far down in the west, and already a few scattered stars shone feebly in the sky. The scent of hayfields came to him from either side of the road; and, above, the crows, with extended necks and wings now flapping, now motionless, were journeying

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homeward. He caught not the scent of the hay-fields, but looked up and saw the black carrion birds sailing along to protecting forests in the falling night.

"They are going home,—they are going home," he mused. "Everybody goes home when the night comes. The cows, the sheep, the birds,—they all go home. Man goes home, too; for the day is given to labor, the night to rest. I am going home myself, to pause a little; for the darkness is falling. Soon the long night will come, when the long day will be over; and then, too, I'll go home,—God grant I'll go home!"

Back at the "Paternion" the crowd is getting thinner, the voices are fewer, the laughter is fast dying away. You can see people walking along the road in different directions, and their words come like echoes; you can see them crossing the fields and climbing over fences, and already their forms are vanishing in twilight. The well is deserted, the beggar woman has counted her pennies and has gone away to her little cabin in the village. The "Maggie man" has collected his wattles and has placed them away securely in his donkey cart; he has pulled up his padded sticks and has placed them away with his wattles. Over all he has spread his canvas and has made it fast. Now he hitches his donkey to the cart; now he, too, is fading into the twilight. The huxters at their booths are placing away their unsold holy objects and the meagre remains of their fruits and candies. They, too, pull down the

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canvas and make it fast over their wares; they, too, harness their donkeys, hitch them to the carts, pull out from the grounds, and fade into the twilight.

Not a soul lingers now. They are all gone. A law, a tradition brought them; a law, a tradition took them away. There was a new day, a joy in their coming; there is falling night and a strange pain that grips at the heart in their going. How silent the field! How silent the well! The grass will grow green again through the course of a long year where the huxters sold their wares, where the men threw the sticks in answer to the call of the "Maggie man," where the children played at their simple games. It will grow green also in the path around the well, now worn into hardness by the procession of many feet.



## THE VISION OF THE GOLDEN CROSS.

MARY CONNELLY was pronounced a "clever" girl by all Knockfeen and far beyond it. She received a convent education, and went to Dublin for what they call the "finishing touches." Already at twenty she was head teacher, with three assistants, in one of the city national schools. On Saturdays she took the evening train home and always spent Sunday with her mother.

She was the light and the joy of the whole parish, and many a poor woman with a boy or a girl in America wondered what in the world would become of Knockfeen if the good God had not sent Mary Connelly. It must be said of Mary that her light was never given a chance to burn under a bushel. During each week of her absence in the city, there were always three or four letters from "beyond the seas." These she had to answer for some of the dear old mothers at home, whom an enlightened Government had kept in ignorance.

Mrs. Clancy, for instance, had a letter from her son Tom, who was in New York. Mary had first of all to read it, had to pause betimes for Mrs. Clancy's running comment and ejaculation, and finally to hear a motherly eulogy on Tom. It was all very beautiful, no doubt; but many

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another girl would have grown tired of comment, ejaculation, and eulogy, and would have found excuses galore to be elsewhere. But Mary loved the simple poor, their tender hearts and kindly ways. So she gave them her Sunday afternoons for correspondence, laughing betimes till the tears came, over the things they said and the way in which they said them.

When, for instance, Tom's letter had been read, and Mrs. Clancy had reached the end of her eulogy, Mary took her "pen in hand."

"Now, Mrs. Clancy, what shall I answer?"

"Yerra, child, say we're all well, of course."

In a strong, neat script Mary wrote down, preceded by an introduction, the information that all at home were well. Then she stopped and looked a question at the kindly-faced little woman.

"Well, child, what is it?"

"Any more?"

"Yerra of course there is!"

Mary waited while Mrs. Clancy sat meditating on just what else she had to say. But her thoughts came slowly. Finally she said:

"Mary alanna, my ould head doesn't think at all. An' 'tis yourself will have to do it for me. Tell Tom to be a good boy, an' go to Mass an' his duties, an' not forget to wear the scapulars an' carry the rosary. An' while you're writing, Mary, I'll make a cup o' tay for the both of us. For I can make that anyhow, even if me ould head doesn't think."



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Then Mary laughed, and Mrs. Clancy joined her as she went off to make the tea.

The girl grew serious while the little woman set about her task, and imagined herself a mother writing to her own son, a stranger in a strange land. What tender things she wrote as the pen went on its swift course! Into every sentence she poured out the Irish warmth of her own young soul. Like a poet when the mood is come, she wrote on and on, such words of endearment and tenderness as can arise only when the heart is warm. Later, when tea was over, she read the mother-message, and the real mother wept sweet tears of holy joy. Then Mary reached down, held the face worn by toil and care between her soft, white hands, and kissed the wrinkled forehead.

"May Our Lady and her blessed Son guard and keep you, Mary alanna, down to the brink of your grave, and beyond it!"

Presently Mary's swift step was taking her down the village street to her home, while Mrs. Clancy leaned over the half-door watching her wistfully with a sealed letter in her hand.

Then there was Auntie Purcell, so-called because instead of marrying, she took care of eight children for her brother when his wife was carried away by cancer. The children were now under every sky,—two in America, two in England, one in Australia, three in Scotland. Mary had to write to them all. Then there were odd jobs of all kinds, like writing a notice to hand to the priest of a Sunday, asking the prayers of the people

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for the dead or the sick; or making a neat news item out of a Land League meeting for the Limerick *Leader*; or writing on cards, with a fine flourish, the names of the children for First Communion or Confirmation. Do not infer from all this that there was no one else in the parish of Knockfeen who could read or write. There were "plenty and more too," as they say. But that is not the point at present.

Mary Connelly's life ran smoothly and sweetly enough. She was young, had a kindly heart, a winning way that secured her a smile and "God bless you!" at every turn of the road, a splendid position, and a host of friends among the high and low. But there were times when her face wore a cloud,—not such a cloud as darkens the heavens before a storm, but a white cloud that stands in mid-sky of a calm summer day. In later years, she would tell you it was a foreboding. One can not judge of that; but surely there were times when Mary's face was sad and her heart was heavy.

After she had been teaching school for some time, Father Tracey met her in the chapel yard one morning coming out from first Mass.

"Mary, they tell me you're a very clever girl, entirely."

"I'm afraid, Father, people have too high an opinion of me."

"Mary, they tell me you're a great teacher too," Father Tracey continued, paying no attention whatever to Mary's act of humility. "And,

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Mary, because you know so much, and because you teach so well, I am going to give you one of the Sunday 'classes' from now on."

Mary smiled at the fine diplomacy, and became a catechism teacher thereafter.

She was successful beyond Father Tracey's every dream; for she had the rare gift of explaining great truths in the simple language of children. Then she taught hymns to the little ones, and had them sing at Mass, with herself at the organ. Many an eye was wet with weeping as the young voices, mellowed with the accent of the land, floated out over the kneeling people. It was all so tender and so full of devotion and lifted them so much nearer heaven, that Father Tracey decided to have Mary prepare them to sing High Mass. But this dream was not to be.

One Sunday morning late in May, Mary and her mother were at early Mass and Holy Communion. On their return home, just as they reached the lawn in front of their cottage, the young girl was conscious that the face of the world was fading away. The familiar things she knew so well were half hidden as in a mist. The trees, the whitewashed houses, the hills, the grey rocks with the glory of the sun upon them,—they were all vanishing, vanishing into haze. The girl caught her mother's arm, and half whispered to herself:

"The heights!—the heights!"

"What is it, alanna?" questioned the mother, with solicitude.

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"The heights!—the heights! And the golden cross!"

"What golden cross, child?"

"Mother," said the girl, more calmly, "I have not told you, because I did not want to bring any sorrow into your life if I could prevent it; but I feel the time is now come when I must tell you. For two years I have felt as if some great trouble were ahead of me. During the last three nights, after I went to bed, a golden cross floated above my face. When I closed my eyes, it floated as in image; and when I opened them again, it was still there. I said my Rosary, and always the cross lingered till I fell asleep. In my dreams I saw it, and when I woke I saw it again like a glory. Yesterday in confession I told Father Tracey, and he said: 'Child, God's hand is always leading us, and in His mercy He leads us only as fast as we can go. Your feet may be strong enough and your heart may be brave enough to go up the heights of sorrow. Be brave, be brave, child; and wherever the hand of God leads, follow.' Mother, my soul grew strong then; and when I received Holy Communion this morning my heart was filled with a burning joy, and in pauses of it I said: 'Lord, the Master of my life, lead and I will follow You up the heights, holding Your hand.'"

"Child, child, all this is wild, wandering talk to me! But you're nearer to God than I am. And the heights of which you speak, God will show you if 'tis His holy will."

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"Mother," said the girl tightening her hands convulsively on the arm she held, "the fields are fading, and the trees and the hills and the sky and the sun. 'Tis getting darker and darker. Now—it is quite dark." Then she held the sweet little lady in her young arms, drew her close to her heart in a long embrace, kissed her, and said simply: "Mother, you will have to lead me hereafter: I am blind."

The years went their swift way, and the world saw very little change in Mary Connelly's outward mode of life. She no longer taught school in the city, but she still had her catechism class in the chapel. Children would crowd around her, and she had a hard task quieting the eager voices that begged for the privilege of taking her home. Still she played the organ, every key of which she knew, every note of which she could awaken. The children still sang simple hymns that quickened all hearts to prayer.

Mary had been to Knock and to a number of holy wells, because her friends insisted she should pray for a cure. But always Mary prayed for greater resignation, and never for a miracle. She was a saint without showing it. Her quiet sense of humor, her appreciation of literature, her love of her people and her country,—these she never put away. She was singularly close to God, yet she had the sweet human traits that made her lovable. She always visited St. James' Well on "Patern Day." But those who knew her heart would tell you that Mary Connelly



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would feel she was losing the guiding hand of God if the light came back to her sightless eyes.

"Mary," said Father Tracey, one "Pathern Day," as he saw her led from the well by a child,—  
"Mary, I see you are still climbing."

"Yes, Father; but you must pray that I may not stumble."

"Child," said the good old priest, solemnly, "you can not stumble. Your hand is in the Hand of God."

It is not so long since Mary Connelly died. Those at her bedside say that shortly before her going, she opened her eyes and saw again the golden cross. She reached up her hands as if to clasp it, and whispered: "The heights are almost won. I am ready to receive my golden cross." Then the vision vanished, and her lips moved for a little. Presently she was silent, having passed out of time to where her sightless eyes would forever gaze upon the "golden cross."

## THE BRIDGE O' THE GHOSTS.

JUST about midway on the white road from Ardee to Athery, another road crosses from the east and runs straight on to the west. If you go to the east, you will have at either side of you stony fields, on which sheep and goats pick such spears of grass as the barren land offers, and in the evening lie down together in hunger and harmony. If you go to the west, you will pass out of the stone belt presently, and the vision of vast dairy farms and well-fed cattle will lift up your heart. If you lean over the breast-high stone fence, a sleek cow will gently push up her moist nose into your hand. If she were of a common breed, she would probably kick up the dirt, and, with a bellow of terror, scamper off to her browsing sisters far down the field. But she is not. She is of the soil, and has caught the friendliness, the bid-you-the-time-of-day spirit of the race. So she makes you welcome with her large, mild eyes; and when you leave, she looks after you with good wishes till you vanish in the distance.

Some way still to the west there is a stately old building called Furness Mansion, set in among



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great, lordly trees. The road runs through the estate, and is quite overshadowed from either side by trees that extend a mile or so north and south. This tree-shadowed portion of the road is about a half mile long; and midway the distance is a bridge, under which a clear stream sings on its journey northward to join the river Deel.

Not in the whole length and breadth of Ireland is there a gloomier tunnel than this piece of road which lies between sunlight and sunlight in the Furness estate. The great trees lock their thousand arms above it; and when the wind comes in squalls from Kerry Head, they writhe and swing and toss, and a great groan breaks from them that is heard in the hushes of the storm. In bright summer days, only a fitful play of sunshine breaks through the interlocking branches and their fan-sized leaves. And never a small boy goes through it of a winter night without gripping his father's arm and shutting his eyes for fear he should see the ghost. Some of the ghost visitations were creations of the brain, no doubt; but of others even at this date one can not be so sure.

Sir Philip Furness, the fifth in the family line to hold the Furness estate, was a widower, the father of two grown-up sons and a daughter. He was known to be the worst landlord in all Ireland--and competition was keen in those days. He committed many crimes, any one of which in a well-governed country would have sent him to prison. His two boys followed his

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wild and wicked ways, while his daughter was loved for her goodness and tenderness, and unmeasured mercy toward God's suffering poor for miles and miles around. No doubt the father and sons would have been made pay for their sins many and many the time by some daring spirit, but for the thought of this gentle lady. Her word and her smile gave more healing to the sick than all the medicines of the apothecary of Ardee; and to the poor she gave with such sweet grace that her gift was dearer to them than all the riches of the king's treasures. They called her the "Little Lady" when she was not present, and "My Lady" when she was. Her vagabond father loved her in his own wild way; and the people never blamed her that he was no better, but blessed her that he was no worse.

"Sure, I saw a goat nursing a lamb over on the hill at Ballydown the other day," said old Paddy Hogan, who had a small holding near the estate; "and the goat was that wild he would climb up to the cross on the chapel for a sprig of ivy; but the lamb was gentle and would nibble a bit o' grass undher a tree. So where's the use in talkin'? Ould Furness is wild like all his breed before him. But the 'Little Lady' isn't wan o' thim. She's o' the mother's side, and the mother came o' good stock. I tell ye again there's no use in talkin.' Things is all right as God made thim, and bye an' bye everywan comes by his own."

In one corner of his estate Furness kept a

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roan bull that was wilder and more wicked than his master. One day two little girls were picking sloes on the edge of the estate. They got separated, and one of them in her search for the other climbed over the fence into the field where the bull was kept. Next day her people found the little body beaten into pulp, while the bull looked down with unconcern from the other end of the field. In all, that bull had crushed out the lives of four persons in two years. But Furness always said: "My bull is mine; my land is mine. And if I put my bull between fences, 'tis for you to keep on the safe side." But the longest road has a bend, as they say; and it seemed quite in accord with the Greek idea of fate that the roan bull should prove the doom of Furness.

It was the day of the hunt in early January. The air was thin and crisp, and if you listened you could hear the bay of a beagle or the blast of a horn five miles away. It was the season of rest, when the potatoes were safe in the pit, and the grain was stowed away in the loft, and the hayricks were snug as could be under their cover of sedge or green rushes. Nearly every man and boy turned out for the hunt. For, although introduced by the English and confined to the gentry, one could never tell when a landlord would get a fall from his horse and break a leg or two—and there was a measure of relief in that.

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So everybody was abroad that crisp day of the young year,—alert, excited, ready for fun. The fox cover—some five acres of fenced land overgrown with furz—was about three miles to the east of the Furness property. Men stood on the top of hayricks and on fences, and on cairns of stones, and on every hill and rise of ground. They were in groups of threes and fours, or sometimes alone; they were talking of former great hunts and great hunters, of how reynard was caught and quartered, or won his race for life. They forgot they were lauding the race that oppressed them, and the sport that made them think of their bondage. After a time they drifted to other topics and talked of well-nigh every subject under the sun, smoking betimes in a quiet way, but always with their faces to the cover.

You could see the foxhounds, their tails wagging excitedly above the furz, searching for the fox in every section, while the red-coated gentry and the ladies of fashion rested easily in their saddles till reynard should decide to hie himself elsewhere. He did presently. Then the official huntsman blew a horn, and hounds, men, women and horses galloped off, with much shouting and hurrah. It was a pleasant sight enough to watch the red coats and the black coats and the fine ladies careering across the country, leaping ditches and wading streams as they followed the hounds, that gave tongue as they ran. Many

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and many is the mile they went; then at the close of the day the fox wheeled around toward the Furness estate. Old Furness himself was well in the lead, and his two bad sons were not far behind him. The "Little Lady" was at home in the mansion, not troubling herself about the wild ways of the hunt, but instead was making ready a tender bit of meat for Maureen Sheedy to take to her mother, who was just getting over the fever.

The fox circled the field of the roan bull; the dogs followed him and so did the hunters—except old Furness. Here was his advantage to make a "short cut" and be first man in when the fox was caught, and so secure the head—the prize of the day. It took less time to open the gate than it does to tell it, and off he started across the field. The bull saw the red coat and ran up in front of the horse. The horse took fright, reared and threw Sir Philip. The enraged bull beat the life out of his body before man, woman or child could reach him.

There was a full week of mourning; and all the gentry of County Limerick, and many a county beyond, came to do honor to the dead landlord. There was a hearse and four horses and a black coffin. There was a half-mile long of fine carriages; but there were no beggar women following after, weeping, and saying, "God be merciful to him that is gone, 'tis he that was good to the poor and



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needy!" The "Little Lady" was in a closed carriage with her wild brothers; and as she passed, those on the roadside said one to another: "God pity the 'Little Lady'! The ould man was wild but he loved his little girl. 'Tis different now, for them boys are as bad as the divils in hell." But Paddy Hogan, who was among them, said: "The 'Little Lady' isn't wan o' them. She's o' the mother's side, and the mother came o' good stock. I tell ye there's no use in talkin'. Things is all right as God made them, an' bye an' bye everywan comes by his own."

About a year after, one of the boys was killed coming from Dublin, and the other took what fortune was coming to him, joined the English army, and has never been heard of to this day.

'Twas no secret around West Limerick that the ghost of Sir Philip appeared many and many a night on the bridge over the stream that flowed down to the river Deel.

"I saw him," said Tade Clancy, "about twelve o'clock at night, when I was coming home from the horse-fair of Ballyowne."

"Yerra, how did he look, 'Tade?" asked one of the boys, who was sitting in the semicircle that nightly gathered around the turf fire.

"Well, he looked for all the world like he did the day of the hunt,—the red coat, the top-boots,

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the spurs an' the whip. He was standing on the battlement o' the bridge, looking down at the wather. An' whin—"

"Maybe he needed a dhrink where he is and came back for it," said a small boy, a member of the family, who couldn't resist the temptation.

Tade looked even graver than before.

"Whin I was a boy I always kept my distance whin my elders were talkin'. Silence is the great virtue of the young."

"Well, as I was saying, whin I saw him my hat flew off my head and my hair stood straight up like the whisks of a new brush. Ned—the horse I sold last year at Limerick—stood stark still, and forty of the strongest men in all Ireland couldn't root him out o' the spot. Thin I saw the roan bull coming from behind the trees on the north side o' the road, and two streams of fire were burning out of his nostrils. Thin Sir Philip seemed to walk in the air, and disappeared in the woods on the south side o' the road, with the bull after him. Thin Ned leaped like mad into the air and hardly touched foot to the ground till we got home. And you couldn't put the top of your little finger on any part of his body that wasn't covered with the foam."

There was testimony galore equally strong, with all manner of assuring circumstances. Phelim



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O'Neill of Ballancar saw him Michaelmas night, for instance, galloping down the road in front of him, and he stopped stark still at the bridge. Then came the loud, long roar of the bull, and the ghost of Sir Philip vanished into the night. Jimeen Sullivan had seen Sir Philip himself and his dead son standing each on one of the battlements, till the roan bull rushed into the middle of the road between them, and they both seemed to float down the stream, which the fire from the bull's nostrils lighted with a light like blood. And testimony was added unto testimony until the most incredulous put on some light cloak of belief, and the bridge in the gloomy road was called the "Bridge o' the Ghosts." It carries the name still, and will carry it until the dark stone battlements are torn away, and the road closed up, and the trees hewn down to let in the sunlight and a smile from the blue face of the sky.

Things do not change in Ireland. Men still go to the horse fair of Ballyowne, and the quay of Athery for seaweed, and to the Ardee apothecary shop for medicines, and to the Limerick races, and to the peat fields afar to the west. And many a strong man who would not wink an eye before a volley of musketry will bless himself and say, "God keep us from harm!" when he comes to the "Bridge o' the Ghosts" in the dark of the night. Things do not change

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in Ireland. The names that quicken the love or the fear in a man by memories, and the song in a man by associations,—these stay forever.

The "Little Lady" did not remain long at Furness Mansion after the death of her father and brother. With her other brother gone, she was alone. As everybody expected, she joined the Faith of her tenants, having been received into the Fold by Father Connelly. Then she lowered the rents by half and went off to Dublin, where she lived very quietly, leaving mansion and estate in charge of a steward.

If you pass along the walk up to the stately old building, every step you take will bring an echo; for the whole place is filled with echoes. If you enter the mansion, an oil painting of Sir Philip will stare at you from the wall, and you will start if you have heard his story. They say his ghost and the ghost of his son wander in endless procession from room to room every night, and that the ghosts vanish when they hear the bellow of the roan bull, long since dead, from the fenced field below. But the steward is a silent man and keeps his council, so the knowledge of the outer world is founded on gossip and hearsay.

"Yerra, they're gone now, and let thim rest!" said Paddy Hogan, one day in the forge at Athery. "The Little Lady' isn't wan o' thim anyhow,

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and that's sure. She's o' the mother's side, and the mother came o' good stock. I tell ye there's no use in talkin'. Things are all right as God made thim, and bye an' bye everywan comes by his own."

## WITHOUT HOUSE OR HOME.

FROM Limerick to Tralee there runs a spur of line which used to bear the name "Waterford and Limerick Railway." Several years ago, however, it lost its identity in the "Great Southern and Western," and to-day the name is forgotten by the younger generation. As the little train makes its way from Limerick on to the West, you pass into the neighborhood of historic Mungret. You will stop at Adare, near which Aubrey de Vere and Gerald Griffin made song. You will move on and leave a couple of stations of no great importance behind you, till you reach the small town of Ardagh that quickens memories.

It was in the summer of the year. The morning train was making its accustomed trip across the quiet country. But from the vision of red coats and white helmets behind the "carriage" windows, one would suppose the crushed spirit of Ninety-Eight was abroad upon the land, and her Majesty's militia was hard upon its wake. But, sad to say, it was not the resurrected spirit of Ninety-Eight! Indeed, if you saw the handful of men that stood around every little station through which the train glided, you would know for sure there was

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no war spirit abroad. Poverty, starvation, emigration, coercion and "rack-rents," had but too surely subdued the fighting Celt. He accepted his hard lot of serfdom sullenly, yet resignedly. The sun of his freedom had gone down in the West, and his eyes had grown a-weary watching for the glimpse of a new day. No, there was no insurrection in Ireland that morning. Her Majesty's two hundred odd soldiers were bent on no hazardous undertaking.

The little town of Ardagh lies some five miles out from a wide acreage of peat fields. In Ireland they use the term "bog," a word vastly more suggestive and exact. One knows of no landscape more desolate than that which breaks upon the view when one is brought face to face with a broad area of bog. A wide desert of heath, its lonesome prospect unrelieved by a solitary tree, its barrenness unblessed by a single blade of wholesome grass, spreads out before you. Narrow roads, that bend and vibrate on their miry foundations, run through the bog in different directions. In the late summer and autumn, either side of every one of these roads is lined with "reeks" of turf, waiting for buyers who come from other parts of the county to haul it home for winter fuel. Here and there mud cabins rise up from the ground, and through their little chimneys the purple smoke rises, spreads, and vanishes. Men, women and children are at work during the turf season, cutting the sods, hauling them away in wheelbarrows, and setting them out to

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dry. It is a dreary task, that keeps a man's face to the ground, and burdens a woman with unnatural toil, and forces children to be ignorant and makes them prematurely old. It is dreary and hopeless; for if the rain comes hard and frequently, as is the case in West Limerick, the turf sods become dank and heavy on the heather, and the sweat and toil are all in vain.

Matthew Arnold says that the Celtic word *gair* (to laugh) expresses the character of the Celtic race. No doubt it does in part. But were he to drive out to the West Limerick bog fields in those days and view the lonesome prospect; were he to see the sad, solemn faces of men, women and children yoked to profitless labor, wearing their hearts away to pay rents, rates and charges, and with the meagre balance trying to live and be clothed, he would probably conclude that *gair* does not fathom all the soundings of the Celt.

Ardagh had heard the rumors, and so was not surprised out of its senses that morning when a cordon of black-jacketed, black-gloved, helmeted policemen, with guns and bayonets, glorified its principal and only street with martial splendor. In Ireland they used to call the policemen "peelers" in contempt, and some still have a fondness for the name. Up from the little station came the soldiers, and above their marching one could hear the engine that brought them, puffing on and on to the West. There were certain loud commands, certain military evolutions, and



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presently police and militia marched out of the town and on to the peat fields. The high call of duty that awaited them was the hazardous task of turning out a family from their cabin because they could not pay the annual rent. It was a long march of five miles, and the clouds were low and threatening.

"It will rain, boys," said Jerry Sullivan, who with two score others followed the marching hosts to the scene of the eviction.

"Faith, Jerry," said Micky Mack, who walked beside him, "we don't need a prophet to tell us that. Sure everybody knows it always rains where there's evictions in County Limerick."

Whether it was the quiet irony or some more patriotic motive that stirred him, Jerry clinched his fists till his finger nails left their impress in the palms of his hands.

"Micky Mack, 'tisin't rain we want, but brimstone to burn every last landlord and soldier and peeler out of Ireland."

This was treason, no doubt. But it must be said of Jerry that he tempered his patriotism with prudence; for his words were not heard by the paid servants of her Majesty.

The scene of the eviction was neither formidable nor inviting. A mud cabin with two small windows, a rush roof, a "reek" of turf a little to one side, an outhouse that might have been a barn, a cowshed, a stable, or a combination of the three,—that was all. The soldiers and policemen made revolutions in approved style, and in due time



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formed a semicircle in front of the house. Then the bailiff—a name symbolic among the Irish of the lowest in henchmanry—began the duties of his ugly office. He walked up to the door, properly guarded by policemen, to execute formal ejection.

A purple mist hung over every section of the bog, and at this moment, with dramatic fitness, Ireland's sky let fall a drizzle of cold, clinging rain. Through a gap between two hills one could look, and fancy the hovering vapors were a stretch of the sea. But the sea was more to the West; and every boy and every girl of the family left homeless that day would hear its eternal calling, would seek and find it, and beyond it, in another land, would work out their individual destinies.

Out of the cabin, followed by the bailiff, came a mother and seven children, ranging in age from two to perhaps twelve years. The mother held the smallest in her left arm, and with her right hand was leading a little chubby-faced, barefoot fellow of about four. The father had just died a year before, hence the pinching poverty that terminated in eviction. Because of the helpless condition of the young family depending on a widowed mother, there was feeling galore throughout all West Limerick. Strong talk went out of armed resistance, and men took rusty guns from their hiding-places; spades, shovels, scythes and pitchforks were also pressed into service. But the priest of the parish was a prudent man; and, while he felt his heart breaking for the sorrows

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of his people, he saw at a glance the results of an encounter between an organized government and a handful of peasantry. So he told his people the Sunday before to put back their guns, spades, shovels, scythes and pitchforks where they got them, and the Lord God would provide for the widowed mother and her little ones. Without a murmur, because of their great love and reverence, they obeyed. But the English Government took no chances. Hence the Limerick militia, and the cordon of police massed together from the well-filled barracks of those days.

The bailiff locked, bolted and nailed up the door. Gradually the crowd broke and melted into the mist. The soldiers and police took up their return journey, and only a few immediate sympathizers remained with the evicted family. These were gathered under the roof of the out-house for protection from the drizzling rain.

"Wisha, Mary," said Ned Connelly, with the familiarity of one who had known the evicted widow from girlhood, "'t isn't much that we have, for God knows we're all poor around here. But there's no house so small it won't hold another. An' if you give me three of the little childer, Anne will care for thim like her own, till God sends us betther times."

And when, with true Celtic delicacy, Mary expressed unwillingness to trouble other people with her burdens, saying that the sweet Saviour and His Blessed Mother would take care of her and her children, there was a chorus of protest

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and cries of "Yerra, what ails you, woman?"—"Sure we're all one and the same out here in the bogs!"—"Yerra, sure if 'tis your turn to-day 'twill be ours to-morrow!"—"You'd think 'tis the house of the Knight of Glen himself we're offering you, the way you're carryin' on!" So with infinite tact these unlettered bogmen divided up the family among them, taking care that the mother and the little one should be together with an old couple who had never seen the world beyond the horizon that bounded the peat fields. Then they left, and by nightfall the cabin was dark and silent.

Just seven years ago a young priest got off the train at Ardagh and walked up its principal and still its only street. It takes very little to quicken curiosity in a small Irish town. Mrs. Clancy stood at her little shop door, her arms akimbo.

"A priest from America!" she called to a next-door neighbor, whose eyes were also following the clergyman.

"Wisha, and may God help the poor man, all the way from thim wild parts!" said her neighbor, with large pity.

The priest secured the service of a jarvy to drive him out the same winding road that the company of soldiers and cordon of police had travelled long years before. He was a tall, muscular man, not over forty years of age, perhaps. He wore a soft, black hat, below which appeared a rich growth of dark hair. The jarvy was loquacious after the manner of his kind.

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But let no traveller mistake the jarvy's racy talk—prepared with the same care as that of the seller of wares—for the quiet, unobtrusive, inoffensive repartee of the unspoiled Celt. This priest seemed to know the jarvy's craft. He had very little to say, had very little interest in what the jarvy was saying, and very naturally this man of words reduced his remarks to mere exhortations and threats to his horse.

When they reached the boglands, there was no rising mist and no falling rain. A warm wind from the sea blew across the wide acres and scattered massed clouds over the face of the sky. Many a mud cabin had gone down, and many a whitewashed home, ample for right human living, had arisen in its place. Men were still at work on the black bogs, and, as before, acres of sod lay drying on the heath. But for the most part the men were working for themselves, having purchased their holdings. The ruined mud walls of what had once been a cabin and an outhouse stood like crumbling tombs in an abandoned graveyard.

The priest viewed the walls and the sky and the face of the land. He took a piece of mud from one of the fallen walls and stored it away in his satchel. "Yes, they'll surely be glad to get this," he said, as he snapped the clasp. He looked yet again at the sky and over the wide acres of bogs. "The mists and the rain are gone; the old cabin is nearly gone, too. The men's faces are less on the ground, and the women are keeping house

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at home, and the children are at school. Yes, it was different," he continued musing, "when mother and the seven of us were turned out, and I was only twelve. But God took care of us."

"I don't like to disturb your Reverence, but you said you wanted to make the evening train to Limerick. We have just an hour, and it takes the pony fifty-five minutes on a trot."

In a little while they were gliding down the sloping road to Ardagh. The jarvy carried home a good fee that night. The priest carried home a piece of dry mud and a wealth of memories.



## MICKY THE FENIAN.

MICHAEL McCABE was his official name in the baptismal records kept in the priest's house at Athery. At Christmas, Easter and the "Stations," Michael McCabe was announced to have contributed a half-crown to maintain religion, or, as the people about said, to "pay his dues." But beyond this official record and these tri-annual announcements, the name Michael McCabe had no person of flesh and blood to correspond to it. Once, indeed, a salesman from Limerick came with samples of leather to show to Michael McCabe.

"By gor," said the road man, who was spreading small stones in a bad bed of the street, "there's ne'er a man here o' that name."

"Faith there isn't an' never was," said a boatman just come in on the tide with a "cot" of seaweed.

"Yerra," said an old sage, scratching his head, "maybe he manes Micky the Fenian — the cobbler?"

Yes, he was a cobbler, the stranger said. Straightway all the hands pointed the index finger in the same direction, and all tongues said



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just the same words at just the same time, "'There he is foreninst ye."

Micky the Fenian was a cobbler by trade, by reputation a Fenian, and by natural bent a storyteller. He was hump-backed, which he said was caused by the horse of a trooper stepping on him when he was hiding under a clump of bushes. He had one eye, having lost the other in a wild raid at Ballingarry. His mouth was very large, his lips very thin, his head very bald. When he told you anything possessing, in his mind, any measure of importance, he looked at you and spoke to you as if he expected you to contradict him. If you didn't contradict, he was disappointed; if you did, you would be apt to remember the date in writing your autobiography.

Micky lived in a small house on a street which was called "Pound Lane." The name was given on account of a small inclosure in from the street, where stray cattle and sheep were kept till redeemed with a fine. The little house was no more prepossessing than its owner. There was a hump on the roof, caused by a deformed rafter, like the hump on Micky's back. There was one small window in front, corresponding to Micky's one good eye. During his working hours he sat inside this window, stitching at a patch or hammering little yellow tacks into the fresh leather of a new sole. In the brief pauses of his work, he would measure the road and then the heavens, for no more definite purpose than to get the pain out of his back, as he said. He would

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sing when the mood was on him, holding the theory that a song lifts the care out of a man's heart. In the days gone by he "drank a little," as people charitably put it, and then all the fervor of the Fenian days leaped in like a surge from the ocean of memory. But during one of the missions the "holy Father" gave Micky the pledge, and never a surge leaped from the ocean of memory afterward.

All his stories were in the nature of monologues, with such interruptions from listeners as might be safely made. Interruptions always hindered the gliding flow of Micky's speech.

"I'm o' that kind," he used to say over and over again, "I'd rather have a man hit me between the two eyes than interrupt the flow o' me words."

A schoolboy, leaning over the half-door while waiting for a pair of shoes, heard Micky make this remark:

"Yerra, Micky, how could I hit you between the two eyes, seein' you have only the one?"

The boy was on the street side of the half-door, however, and did not tarry.

Like many a story-teller of repute, Micky had passed the time when he could discern the false from the true. Subjectively, perhaps, all that he said measured up to facts. Objectively, he described and narrated on so gigantic a scale that the schoolmaster said he should be classified with the saga makers of the Red Branch Cycle. The people who heard this did not catch the force of the allusion; no more did Micky. But

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he took it as a compliment, and let it go at that.

The hero of all Micky's tales was the first person singular of the personal pronoun. And never in the memory of man did the first person singular of the personal pronoun come out second in the denouement of Micky's tales.

To begin with, Micky said he was a Fenian. He had no record to show it, except his blind eye and his hump, and these were not conclusive. But no one seemed able or willing or daring enough to disprove his claim, so he went down through the years as "Micky the Fenian." He reckoned all dates by the number of days, months or years before or after some narrow escape or daring deed in his shadowy life. One night they were talking about the time Jimeen Sullivan went out to America, and a dispute arose about the year, then Micky said:

"I beg lave to tell ye, boys, Jimeen Sullivan left for the other side, of all the days o' the year, the day before I ran from Croom to Cappamore with sojers afther me; an' that was in the month o' May, sixty-seven."

Then some of the boys said: "Yerra, Micky, that must have been a great race!" and "Did they catch you, Micky?" and "How did you escape, Micky?" Micky relighted his pipe, puffed out the blue smoke thoughtfully for a little, and then told his story somewhat after this fashion:

"Boys, thim wor great days. But the min o' me time are all gone, an' there's no min left behind."

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Jim Donnelly talked up and battled for the present:

"Faix there's as good fish in the say as ever was caught."

"There is, is there? Thin if there is, why don't ye catch thim?"

"It was in sixty-seven,—in the month o' May, sixty-seven. I was in Croom waitin' to join the Fenian min who wor comin' be night from Limerick. 'Twas about seven o'clock in the evenin' maybe, an' I was sittin' outside Mike Fagan's public house, pretendin' nothin'; for there wor two peelers sthandin' on the opposite side o' the sthreet. By an' by comes along an ould woman with a bucket o' wather on her head. An' says she in Irish: 'If Micky the Fenian is a wise man an' wants to escape the gallows, he'll lave the town to-night; for the dragoons are afther him.'—'A wink is as good as a nod to a blind man,' says I.—'Faix 'tis so,' says Mike Fagan, who was sthandin' beside me at the time. But the divil a word the peelers understhood, with their big helmets up upon thim, that made thim look the boobies they were.

"So with the fallin' o' the night I walked unsuspecting like out the Pike road till I got beyant the town. Thin I ran like I was makin' for the gate o' heaven with St. Pether waitin' to shut it. Glory be to the great God, how I ran an' ran, over ditches an' whitethorn finces, an' across fields out o' which a lark would rise as I woke him! The moon was up, an' the sky was so thick

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with stars you could hardly get your little finger between thim. But little time I had for moon or stars, with the dragoons behind me. Whin I was crossin' by Jackeen Madigan's house, his two greyhounds ran out afther me. We had a race down to the ditch at the other ind o' the field; an'—do ye believe me, boys?—I bate thim by twenty yards; an' jumped over a fince six feet high an' the trench at the other side of it."

"You did!" exclaimed the incredulous listeners.

"I *did*, I tell ye!" answered Micky. "I heard the galloping horses o' the throopers away on the distant road, an' me heart leaped up to me mouth. They kep' comin' closer an' closer along the road, an' all the time I kep' in among fields till I got to the bogs of Cappamore. There was a boreen ladin' into the bogs; an', as the ould boy, their father, would have it, he brought the dragoons along the boreen. I ran in among the sedges that grew as straight as a ramrod out o' one o' the ponds. So there I hid meself, with only me head above the wather an' me hands holdin' on to two bunches of sedges to keep me from sinkin'. An' the sedges shook like ivy leaves, me breath was comin' so fast."

"They did!"

"They *did*, I tell ye!"

Micky paused here to give his hearers time to take in the full difficulty of his situation.

"Glory be to God, but you wor in a terrible way, Micky!" ejaculated Owen Conway.



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"He was that!" came a number of agreeing voices.

"Yerra, how did you come out of it at all?" Jim Donnelly asked, anxious for the outcome.

"Well, if I was a minute, I was down there in the wather for two hours, an' the dragoons huntin' high up an' low down tryin' to find me. An' to this day I don't know how I ever kep' sowl an' body together, I was that cowl'd. At last one o' thim came right over where I was, an' saw me."

"He did!" came an exclamation in which surprise and doubt commingled.

"He *did*, I tell ye! An' he was a Kerry man, who for some sthrange reason joined the red-coats. Says he in Irish, in a kind of a whisper:

"'Micky the Fenian! sthay sthille where you are, for I see you. There's a rope hangin' from the gallows up near Dublin waitin' for you. But they won't catch you to-night, Micky; for you're one o' me race, an' blood is thicker than wather.'

"Well, he sthayed around the place so the others would keep away. An' by an' by, whin they were startin' off, the captain says in a loud voice that made the heart in me cowl'd:

"'Search that clump of sedges.'

"'Captain, I searched it already,' says the Kerry man, salutin'.

"'March on, thin!' says the captain; an' away they rode.

"Seven years ago I met that Kerry man at the fair of Knockfinnen, an' he was no more a



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dragoon. He left the sojers an' settled down in his father's little holdin' outside Tralee. I thanked him with tears in me eyes, an' offered to thrate him.

"'Thank you,—thank you, Micky!' says he. 'No thratin' for me. I took the Father Mathew pledge whin I left the sojers, an' I've always kep' it. An' as for savin' your life,' says he, 'sure you're one o' me race, an' blood is thicker than wather.'"

"He was a good man, God bless him, whoever he was!" said Owen Conway, with pious gratitude.

"He was," agreed Micky, as he put away his pipe.

"But tell me, Micky," asked Jim Donnelly, "how did they know you were in Croom? An' how did they know the road you took? An' what made thim search the bog? An' why couldn't they see you in the moonlight?"

"Didn't I tell you," answered Micky, with rising ire, "that the divil, their father, tould thim." Then, addressing the others, he added: "There are some people, boys, wouldn't understand their name if ye spelled it out for thim; an' they wouldn't know they have an eye in their head till you put your finger in it."

There is just one other of Micky's narrow escapes which stands distinct through the years. A force of six policemen formed the searching party in this tale.

"In April, sixty-five," as Micky told it, "I druv down in a donkey an' car from Ballyfinnan

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to see me sister, a woman with five childer. Her husband—a good, honest man he was—they had laid away in the graveyard six months before, an' she had a hard time enough keepin' the little ones together. So I wint down to see her, an' give her a helpin' hand an' a word o' cheer. There was a government spy that saw me, an' he tould the peelers. Down they came to me sister's place; an' they would ha' caught me out in the garden makin' dhrills, only one o' the neighbors ran like a hare an' tould me.

“‘Micky,’ says he, ‘they’re comin’!’

“Faith, I didn’t sthop to ask any questions, but ran sthraight into the haggard at the back o’ the house. There was a big rick o’ hay, and I was for hidin’ in it; but out me sister came when she saw me, an’ says she:

“‘Don’t go into the rick, Micky. They’ll search that.’

“‘Then where’ll I go, woman?’ says I.

“Well, to make a long story short, she made me sit down in the ground, an’ thin got some hay out o’ the big rick an’ covered me with it, an’ thin got the childer to play quietly around what looked for all the world like a cockeen o’ hay. By an’ by the peelers came along; an’ the sergeant, a rogue with a red beard and a crooked eye, called in to me sister an’ says:

“‘Have you any sthrangers in your primises, mam?’

“‘Yerra an’ what would sthrangers be doin’ in the primises of a poor woman like me?’

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“‘Is your brother, Michael McCabe, or Micky the Fenian, in your house or ‘primises?’

“‘Faix me brother, Micky the Fenian, as ye call him, don’t often bother me or me primises.’

“‘Haven’t you seen Micky the Fenian?’

“‘Yerra of course I have many an’ many a time! Isn’t he me brother? An’ ’tisen’t ashamed of him I’d be.’

“‘Well, the long an’ the short of it was, the peelers got no tale or trace of me from the woman, an’ sthaight away they began searchin’ the rick of hay. They druv the swords down into it, an’ sideways through it, an’ didn’t lave a wisp they didn’t examine. But the childer kep’ on playin’ around the cockeen, pretendin’ nothin’, but laughin’ an’ runnin’ about for thimselves. An’ all the time I was down undher, makin’ an act o’ contrition, expectin’ every minute I’d have a sword in me back. But God protects His own; for the peelers marched off without ever findin’ me, glory and praise be to Him an’ His blessed Mother!’”

Micky’s stories, as has been said, were not literally true; but most of them had the foundation and rough outer walls of fact; he embellished on a large scale, leaving the imagination to fill in the details. He was an artist after a fashion,—not a polished artist, as the phrase goes. Yet he had the gift—call it by what name you will—of getting the fragments of a story together, and of never wasting a word in telling it. He was not a man to catch you with his looks, and he

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had a vain way of putting himself in the forefront. But human beauty is something given, not acquired; and as for a little vanity, nearly everybody has that. All told, Micky's faults were neither deep nor hidden. His gentleness, his charity, his reverence, his simple faith,—these were all in the stiller depths beneath the ruffled surface of a brusque, breezy nature.

## BROTHER AND SISTER.

ALTHOUGH Phelim and Danny O'Neill were twin brothers, fourteen years old, you could hardly find two boys more unlike in appearance, talents, and tastes. Phelim was a tall, muscular lad, with a well-shaped head of black hair. He could cast a stone, twelve pounds in weight, two feet farther than many a lad three years his senior; he could leap across a trench like a race horse; could hurdle and kick football in approved style. He was a "block of a boy," as they say, who liked the fresh air and the ways and the games of a boy. He had a gay laugh, eyes brimful of fun, and cheeks as ruddy as an autumn apple. His father was proud of Phelim the younger, and said he would be the head of the house some day. The lad was proud of his father, because he could train a young horse till a child could handle him; because he could tell the value of a cow to a half-crown; because he could show the servant boy how to make a potato drill as straight as a string when 'tis pulled tight; because he could tell when the hay should be cut to an hour, and when the oats was ripe to a half-hour. Phelim O'Neill was a "knowledgeable" man, the

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neighbors all said; and the neighbors were right.

Danny was a lad you could blow away with your breath, he was that frail. His face and his hands were as white as new cream; and his eyes were gentle when they were turned full on you, which seldom happened; for they had a way of losing themselves in vacancy. He never played with the boys of his age, as Phelim did. Small blame to him either; for he could hardly kick the ball four times the length of himself, and a six foot trench was too wide for him to jump. He was shy and retiring, and stayed at home with his mother and his sister Nell. He had two other grown sisters also, Mary and Ann; but they worshipped the strong and the valorous Phelim.

"I like Phelim, he's so strong and so handsome," Mary said, as she watched her brother playing on the lawn.

"Yes, and his hair is like silk and he carries his head high," Ann added.

There is always a touch of tenderness when health and beauty stand on the side of weakness. Now, 'twas a known fact throughout Knockfeen that Nell O'Neill might pass you by six times a days on the highroad, and every time she passed, you would say to yourself: "That girl has not her equal in all Ireland." Father Tracey was not given to comment on the accident of beauty, but one day he said:

"Nell, you're fit to be a duchess or a queen, but I hope the Lord God will give you to some



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honest Irish boy, who will have the beauty and the virtue, which kings and dukes don't always have."

So when her sisters sang the praises of Phelim, Nell rose to the defence of her frail brother.

"Phelim's hair may be silk, and his head may be high, and he may be strong and handsome; but Danny is first in all his classes, and brings home the prizes. Miss Connelly, after catechism last Sunday, said he was among the brightest boys she had ever met."

To tell the whole truth, Nell said all this with a tilt to her head and an expression of defiance lingering about the corners of her mouth that provoked a retort. And the retort came, you may be sure.

Then the mother, a woman of fifty, with a soft voice that turned away anger, threw in a kindly word.

"Children dear, why do you be working yourselves up about trifles? Sure Phelim is mine and I love him, and so are you all, and so is my Danny."

But always the mother drew the delicate lad toward her when she said this, and stroked his head and held him close for a little.

"Yes; but, mother, you love Danny more than all of us," Mary commented.

"Mary, didn't you hear the servant girl tell you that the grey hen out in the barnyard keeps the weak chicken always next her? It wouldn't be nature if the mother didn't love the weakest. That's why God gives her the mother heart.

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You're all strong and hearty, and you can go out among people and enjoy yourselves. But Danny is as frail as a flower; so he stays at home and reads for me when you're all away. Yes, Mary dear, I love you all, but I love my Danny too."

Now, she meant to say, "I love my Danny best," but she suppressed the word that might inject the poison of jealousy.

One still has a picture of the O'Neill farm a mile out from Knockfeen. A tree-lined avenue led up to the house from the main road. There were barns and stables and cowhouses to the rear. Around these, in the early summer mornings, the servants drew from the full udders of the well-fed cows the foaming white milk, some of them singing as they worked. There was the noise of milk cans, and the plaintive bawling of calves, and the loud calling of human voices, that gave you the impression of business and hurry. Sometimes Phelim O'Neill—called "the Masther" by the servants—came out from the dwelling-house on a tour of inspection. He never talked loud or long when matters did not suit him, which had a far-reaching effect with his servants. For usually the man of few words puts his speech into act. Yet "the Masther" was singularly kind and treated those who worked for him with marked courtesy. "Signs on," remarked one of the neighbors, "he gets more out o' thim."

Directly in front of the living house were flower beds interwoven with a network of gravel walks. Beyond the flower beds stretched a great

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lawn, in which, here and there, lordly oaks made wide shadows. At the end of the lawn, a stream flowed over little slate-like stones, and murmured as it went.

Inside, the house was richly, though not grandly, furnished. One does not remember the details after so many years, but the impression remains of a substantial home with all the home comforts. Indeed, Tade Clancy remarked one day:

"By gor', Phelim O'Neill is well off enough to be a Prodestant!"

"He is,—indeed he is," answered Owen Conway, "and he deserves it." Then he swerved from his thought and added: "Faith the Prodestants are all well-to-do in this world, however 'twill be wid 'em in the next."

The years went their swift way, and before one knew it Phelim was entering his young, healthy manhood. Gradually the father placed the burdens he had borne so long on the shoulders of the son who carried his name. Mary and Ann were married, and had such weddings as Knockfeen never saw before or since. But Nell was still single; and, though she was yet young, people said it was time to select one from the many who would be proud of her hand. Somehow, Nell did not select, and the neighbors kept wondering. Danny grew stronger with years; and, though he wasn't a giant and never would be, he was no dwarf either. He was sent to Blackrock College, because he liked books; so was Phelim,

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for that matter; but Phelim thought he had learning enough after two years' stay, and settled down to take up the burdens of the farm.

One day during the vacation, after Danny had received his A. B. degree, Nell and himself walked out through the flower beds and down the wide lawn to the stream. It was cool there. Under a tree that threw its shadow across to the other bank, they sat down together. The place was very still. Only a few wandering bees buzzed about in drowsy fashion. Here and there a stone projecting above the stream churned the gliding waters into foam. Not a bird sang in the summer heat; not a dog barked at the coming of a stranger; not a cow lowed to be driven to the dairy yard, for the milking hour was not yet come. It was very quiet there. Neither brother nor sister was anxious to break the silence, for they were under the spell of the place.

People who think that entertainment consists in conversation, and therefore must always converse, miss the meanings of chasmy pauses. Often the pause in a song is sweeter than the song itself. Those who sit or walk and feel free to be silent will speak only when the mood is on them. For conversation, like writing or oratory or music, must be quickened by inspiration. The fact that people so soon grow weary of one another often arises from the fact that they have never cultivated the language of silence. Nell had a secret for her brother, and she wanted his advice.

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When she spoke, she was still half lost in the mazes of her reverie.

"Danny, we have come on together ever since we were children. We are children no more. We have reached the end of the journey."

"Yes, the end of the journey!" echoed Danny. The girl roused herself.

"Brother dear, you don't understand me. I mean the real end of the journey. We must say good-bye and part."

"Yes, we must say good-bye and part!" came the echo.

Nell shook "brother dear" by the shoulders, and her eyes looked straight into his. Then she said with emphasis, as if she were a judge pronouncing a sentence:

"Danny O'Neill, listen and hear! Your beloved sister, Nell O'Neill, whom all Knockfeen expects to see married soon, isn't going to marry at all. A month from to-day she'll be in the convent of Good Shepherd to begin learning to be a nun."

Danny had caught the pious phrasing of the spiritual adviser during his college course; and, placing his hand on the head of his sister, said with mock solemnity:

"Daughter, we bless your choice, and hope you'll never return."

Then sister and brother forgot solemnity, and their laughter drowned out the buzzing of bees and the murmur of gliding waters. But in a little while the laughter died away, and they were serious again.



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"Danny, I know my choice will surprise everyone around, even if it doesn't surprise you."

"You see, Nell, I know you better than anybody else does, and that's why."

"Yes, I think you know me, Danny," said the girl, looking thoughtfully at her brother. "I feel I ought to go, that my place is there; and if I stay, I know I won't be happy."

"Then, go, Nell! I'll miss you, of course. But I'd miss you more only I am going too."

"Going too?"

So Danny had a surprise also.

"Yes, I have made up my mind to be a priest."

"O Danny, how good God is!" And straight way the girl reached over and kissed the white face of her brother.

"You'll be in Maynooth for three or four years, then you'll be a curate in the city or somewhere near it, and you can come in and see me. And—oh, 'twill be just like home!" The future nun clapped her hands with the joy of anticipation.

"No, Nell," Danny, answered wistfully. "Even that can't be."

"That can't *be*!" exclaimed Nell, with marked emphasis on the last little word.

"No."

"And why, sure?" The head was tilted a little to one side, the lips were parted in a troubled way, and the eyes were suspiciously misty.

"Nell, I'll tell you, if you promise not to waste time afterward trying to make me change my mind."



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Of course Nell promised—for 'twas a great secret, — but made all manner of mental reservations.

Danny began: "Last year, some time before Christmas, a priest from America visited the college. He was a missionary priest from Texas, a State bordering on Mexico. He was with us only three days, and the day before he left the president asked him to address the students. He was a tall, thin man, about fifty years of age, who had left Ireland twenty years before, and had never seen it since. He was returning, he said, to visit the old place in Galway where his sister, the only living member of his family, was residing. Then he switched off and spoke about his far-away mission. 'Young men,' I remember him saying, 'I may say of Texas to you what Christ said to His Apostles, of the region about Him, "the harvest is great but the laborers are few."' He told of the high blue sky, and the hot sun; of the ranches, or farms, stretching for miles and miles away; the parched fields; the cattle wandering over miles of prairie; the cowboys that live and die on the backs of their horses. Then he spoke of the want of priests. 'Here are some of you,' he said, 'studying to be priests for your own island home. My parish is longer and wider than any seven dioceses in Ireland. Here you have priests in abundance; there, the men and the women of your own race, and of every other race, are hungering for the bread of the Word, but there is no one to break it to them. There is a great call from the Heart

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of Christ for some heroic young men among you, who feel they have a vocation for the priesthood, to make an act of renunciation and seek the vast tractless regions of Texas, there to plant the seed of faith. The sacrifice is great but the reward is eternal!"

Danny paused for a little and then added quietly: "Nell, I have made the act of renunciation. I am going to Texas."

Nell cried softly, and Danny gazed thoughtfully at the stream. There is relief in tears; for when the true-hearted girl had wiped her eyes, and when the cooling evening wind had removed all the tell-tale marks of her weeping, she was calm, almost reconciled. She took her brother's arm and they walked home together.

In one of the mission cemeteries of Southern Texas there is a well-kept grave with an unpretentious monument at the head. There is a well-equipped academy near by. The Sisters think it a sweet task each day to water the grass that is always green above the decaying bones. They will tell you the story of a refined young priest who arrived from Ireland some years before. They will speak of his long journeys to Mexican camps and scattered ranches of Catholics. They will tell of the fever that caught him. They will speak of a night when a couple of devoted Mexicans, after bringing the dying priest across wide wastes in a canvas-covered wagon, left him at the door of the convent to the protection of the Sisters. They will not speak of their own large

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charity in caring for the homeless one, who left a home beyond the seas. No; but they will eulogize his sweet patience, his readiness to live or to die as God willed, his gratitude for every least service. Yes, and they will tell with tears of a little brass crucifix which he always carried next his heart.

"Send this to Nell. She'll be glad to keep it," he said tenderly, when the hand of Death was already clutching at his throat.

Later they sealed the precious relic, with a letter, and sent it away. He who had worn it and prized it so dearly was also gone away. Four weeks later the nun in Good Shepherd convent read that letter, so full of sympathy and sweet appreciation for him who in life she could meet no more. Nell wept long and silently, till every page was wet with her tears. Over and over again she kissed the little crucifix which he had carried so close to his heart. Many and many a time afterward she looked at it and held it to her lips with a thought and a tear, and a prayer for him who had left father, mother, brothers, sisters, lands, and all else to seek the wandering sheep on the arid plains.

## THE HILL O' DREAMS.

WHERE the river Deel flows into the Shannon below Athery, there is a wide stretch of water that makes one think of the sea. And as you watch the smoke of a calm day lifting from the chimneys of the passing boats and trailing in the air behind them, a longing for the ocean clutches your heart. When the sun is warm and the blue of the sky is far above, you will sit on the crest of a hill out of which grows many a rock that has weathered the winds for ages. It is a still place up there,—so still, so far away, and overlooking so vast a reach of land and water, they call it “The Hill o’ Dreams.” To the east of you, the face of the land is flat, and the smoke rises out of many a farmhouse, as it does from the boats on the river. South of you, and on the west side of the Deel, the smoke rises, too, from the chimneys of Athery. But you can not see the houses, as they lie in a valley below. You look north, and then the dreams come; for the Shannon is in front of you, deep and lordly, bearing its everlasting tribute to the ocean. Away on the other side, the hills of Clare are faint and far; for a haze hangs before them,—the haze of distance.

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But up there on the hill, when you are still young, you never take the slightest account of water or sky or land. You sit and dream; and the child dreamer never keeps count of his dreams. The boats that glide so lazily past you far out in mid-river are not carrying turf to Limerick or grain to Kilrush: they are fairy boats from spirit land, sailing back to spirit land. There is a wild longing to join the boats of the fairies and sail away to the land of the ever young. You watch them as they become a speck and vanish. The smoke that hangs on their wake, lifts, grows whiter and thinner, and vanishes. The foam in their track rises and falls with the wave for a little, and vanishes. So, too, your dreams come and vanish, as all dreams do. You may never be able to write them in story, for the strangest dreams are never told; you may never be able to sing of them, for the sweetest dreams are never sung. Men tell us that whosoever thinks clearly can write clearly. Which is true no doubt of thoughts as the mind thinks them; for every thought is mated to a word. But there are dreams that reach beyond language,—dreams that come gushing from the wells of memory; dreams of faces; dreams of moments, of scenes; dreams that quicken the beat of the heart, or lure the eye into vacancy. You can not tell of these dreams; at least you can not tell of them as they come to you in dream hours.

Below "The Hill o' Dreams" there used to be a neat cottage, in which lived Tim Hogan, the



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laborer, and his little girl. He had other children, but some had died, and the rest, when they were old enough, sailed west to the country of gold, as they thought. Tim's wife was gone, too,—but she was gone to heaven; for she was a good woman, all the neighbors said. Tim took care of a rich man's estate on the other side of the Shannon. So he had a good stretch of water to glide through in his little boat every morning, and an equally long pull to get back home in the evening.

Eileen, the youngest child, was about eight years old when she was all that was left to Tim. Because she was his all, and he was left, as he said, like an old bird in a forsaken nest, with only one of the brood to sweeten his life with her song, he loved his Eileen with a great love. In the morning before he set out to work he folded the little girl in his strong arms and held her to his anxious heart.

"Eileen, my *coleen dhas*, I'm goin' out like the tide, an' I'll come back like the tide again. An' 'tis my heart will be hungry for the touch of you, an' my eyes achin' for the sight of you all the day. But God will take care of you, my baby bird, till I come back."

Then her little white hands would tighten around his neck, and her little red lips would reach up and kiss a hundred times the weather-beaten face. When he rowed out from the land, she watched him from the river-bank, and her



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young eyes followed him with a great yearning till he was lost to sight.

"Come, Shep!" she would say to the shepherd dog that was her companion and protector. "We must go in and clear the table after dadda's breakfast, and feed the chicks,—and, O yes, I must give you some breakfast too, Shep!"

Shep panted with great delight, taking a few rolls on the grass to show his approval. He always trotted before the little girl, but never very far, and frequently turned back and walked directly in front of her.

"Dada is far out on the river now, but he'll be back again to-night."

Shep would wag his bushy tail, look up at the face of his mistress and almost speak.

When the table was cleared, and the house swept, and the chickens fed, and Shep had lapped up his breakfast, Eileen locked the door, and with her lunch and her books neatly stowed away in her bag, set out for school along the river-bank, with the dog trotting before her. Shep left her at the edge of the village, where she was among kindly people, and ran back to keep watch on the cottage through the day. In the afternoon he returned, and waited where he had left her in the morning till he saw her coming, when he bounded for joy at the sight of her, and home they went together.

Eileen was a child of the hill,—a child of dreams. It was there she watched for the return of her father when the sun was sloping to the

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west. She saw the boats come and go like phantom ships. She wondered whence they came and where they went. Was there some land of mystery away to the east, where the mist never hung heavy, where fountains leaped in song, where soft winds were always sweet with the odor of flowers? Were the phantom ships bearing the happy people of that lovely land out to the great sea in the west, at whose brink she stood one day with her father and saw the great breakers rolling up against the rocks? Were the waves calling to them as she heard them call to her that day? Were those happy people leaving their land of sun and flowers in the east and heeding the call of the sea in the west? So Eileen wondered day after day; and sometimes she asked her father, but he said:

“Child, child, you’re always dramin’! Sure I’m tired tellin’ you there’s no lovely land in the east. An’ those boats carry no happy people as I know, except a captain an’ a mate an’ a couple o’ helpers. Sure they come from Limerick, an’ they’re going to Foynes or Tarbert or Kilrush. An’ that’s the end of it.”

Sometimes Eileen lifted her eyes from the river to the sky, and above her she saw the white clouds that were drifting below the motionless blue. She wondered if the blue might not be the ocean of God, it was so large and so far away; if the clouds might not be the smoke from the ships of heaven. It might be so; for the waters fell down from the sky sometimes and made the

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grass green and brought millions of daisies from the heart of the earth. It was good of God to send down the rain from the ocean of heaven; for the oceans of earth are salty. The stars were the lighthouses which the angels lighted to guide the ships of heaven. And when the stars were not lighted, God was angry and the sea of heaven was rolling, and all the ships not safe in their harbor were tossed on the billows above. Presently when her father's boat appeared above the horizon, Eileen put away her dreams and ran down the hill to the river to meet him.

But one evening Tim Hogan came home, and there was no Eileen to meet him. At first he supposed the child was in the cottage, though there never was an evening before when she was not waiting for him on the bank. He entered the house, his heart beating with terrible suspicions. The place was deserted and dark.

"Holy Mother of God!" cried the old man, "what will I do at all, at all? Sure I never missed her this way before, an' I might as well be dead as be without my little girl."

After a while he began to think, and his thought took form. He hurried to the crest of the hill: it sickened him not to find her there. He walked along the river-bank, looked up into the trees and down into the water; he went for some distance along her path to school, returned and searched among the currant bushes of his garden. Nowhere,—nowhere! He called, but only the lapping of the waves and the murmuring of the

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wind came back to him for answer. He entered a little cave at the base of the hill, where often and often the chickens dozed at noontime. It was dark—quite dark—there now. He was about to leave the place when his foot came in contact with some object on the ground. He lighted a match, and stretched dead on the earthen floor he saw Shep, his long, brown-and-white hair matted with blood, his head almost severed from his body, his teeth broken in his blood-covered mouth. The old man rushed out to the cottage for a candle, and, returning, viewed the body of the dog with a strangely quiet scrutiny. Tim Hogan understood now, and choking sobs broke from him.

“O Shep, Shep, my brave dog! They killed you,—they killed you, an’ stole away my little girl! An’ never a better dog followed the feet of man than you, my Shep, lyin’ dead there in the dust!”

Then he put away his grief as unworthy, even as the bride of Christ puts down her silks and gold and gems before the altar. He raised his right hand to Heaven and sent up a great prayer:

“Blessed God, I have never wronged or injured man, woman or child! I wouldn’t step on the meanest thing that crawls upon the face of the earth. I have tried to serve You all the years. And now, blessed God of my race, let Your light be with me till I find my child!”

Forty minutes later Tim Hogan was in Athery on the “square” before the post office, with a

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number of sinewy men standing around him. He had brought them together with very little difficulty; for the day was over, and villagers usually collected in the "square." Brief as his story was, he had not finished when every eye blazed fight, and every heart quickened with emotion for the lonely man and his stolen child and the faithful dog.

"Of course 'twas the gypsies stole 'er, the poor child! Who ever heard of dacent people runnin' off with other people's childer?" This was Micky the Fenian's thought, and perhaps Micky was right.

Then the information was given that a man and two women were seen hovering about the town for the past three or four days; that they were down by the river-bank, not far from the cottage. Testimony followed testimony, given with solemn finality, as to the man and the two women and their mysterious behavior. Then there was some discussion as to which road they should take to seek for the stolen girl. Some said: "Let's take the road to Limerick." And others said: "Let's take the road to Ardee." But Tim Hogan said: "God's holy light is guidin' me. Let's take the road to Tarbert and the sea." Argument ceased; for Hogan spoke quietly and his eyes were full of brilliance.

Five armed men, including Hogan, mounted on swift horses, left the village and trotted westward into the night. The sky was aglow with stars and the full moon brightened the silent fields.



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The men did not speak much on the way, for they felt they were on a mission. Tim Hogan spoke not at all, but his eyes were always on the west. After many hours they were nearing the sea; they could hear its everlasting pulse beating; they caught its pungent odor in their nostrils. The dawn would soon be breaking, and the sight of the waters would follow? "But where then?" came the question, to the brain of every one of the four riders. Tim Hogan divined the question, and spoke for the first time in a language not like the racy language of the land:

"The light o' God is guidin' me; we will not see the ocean with the sun shinin' on it. We will find my child before we get to the sea."

At the next turn of the road, Hogan and his faithful cohorts saw Eileen, like an apparition, walking toward them on her journey home. You must imagine the child's cry of joy as she leaped into the arms of her father; you must imagine the great, relieving sobs, the holy kisses, the protecting embrace of Tim Hogan once he held his little one safe to him. You must imagine the men who accompanied the laborer holding their horses, silent, bareheaded, reverent, as if God's presence was singularly near. You must imagine these things, for any attempt to tell must make them paltry.

The journey home is a mere detail. The joy of the village when Eileen returned, seated on the horse before her father, the words of welcome, the prayers, the ejaculations of "Glory be to the



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Blessed Lord and His Holy Mother!" the talk and the wonder and the murmur,—all must be passed over as incidents, which, if very interesting, would of necessity give the effect of crowding.

Eileen's own story is soon told. About four o'clock on the afternoon she was stolen, two women and a man walked up "The Hill o' Dreams," where she sat watching the boats. Shep sniffed the air uneasily when he saw them, nor could the child's gentle coaxing quiet him. One of the women asked for a drink of sweet milk, as the day was hot and they had a long journey to go. The strangers accompanied them down the hill to the cottage, Shep keeping close to his little mistress, growling viciously if any of the strangers came too near. The child opened the door and was about to enter, with Shep immediately following, when the man, a large, burly fellow, suddenly threw himself full weight on the dog and penned him to the ground. It was an easy task for the two women to force the child within the cottage, but it was not so easy for the man outside to carry the dog to the cave and there almost sever his head from his body; for Eileen said it was twenty minutes before death hushed his howls.

Blindfolded and gagged, the child was carried off to a gypsy van in an unfrequented road out from the village. About eight o'clock in the evening they went out to the main road and travelled to the west. This gave them about two hours' start of the horsemen. But the gypsy van

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was heavy with all manner of stolen wares, and the gypsy horse never travels fast. It was after a night of travel that the gypsies got nearer the sea, and then they heard the beat of horses' hoofs behind them. They tried their hardest to quicken the pace, but the best the gypsy horse could do was poor indeed; the hoof beats grew more distinct, and they debated a little. The women were for holding the child. But the man suddenly lifted her from where she sat cowering, and dropped her on the road, saying: "Follow this long enough and you'll get home." Then he lashed his horse for the thousandth time, and the van rumbled away.

It must be said that the people of the village and the countryside never quite forgave Tim Hogan for not allowing the horsemen to follow up the gypsies. But Hogan always had the same answer:

"I made my prayer and my promise to God. God heard my prayer, and I kept my promise. Blessed forever be His holy Name!"

## THE TRIUMPH.

WHEN Maurice Ahern died of pneumonia shortly after Christmas, he left a widow and a young son behind him. One would say Mrs. Ahern was fifty and young Maurice fourteen. They were well off enough while the elder Maurice lived; but God took him, and then the two had to make out for themselves.

Shortly after the funeral, Mrs. Ahern went up to the "Great House" to see the "Masther," Sir Robert Ferendale. Her husband had been his sheep-tender—shepherd in pastoral phrase,—and she wanted to know if she could still keep her little house and tend the sheep. The "Masther" was not such a bad man, but his sheep must be thought of.

"My good woman, I should like to help you, for your husband was a faithful servant; but surely you can not take care of all my sheep?"

"Your honor, I'm not manin' myself, but the little boy."

"Your little boy take care of my sheep? In the washing season? In the shearing season? In the yeaning season? And the old sheep to be sold off? And the new ones to replace them? Impossible! Your son is the merest child."

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"Yes; but, your honor, he used to be about with his father a great deal mornin' an' evenin' when he was home from school, an' he does be very knowledgeable."

"Mrs. Ahern, I really am afraid to trust my sheep to so young a boy."

"Wisha couldn't your honor give him a thrial? Your honor wouldn't lose much by that."

"Very well, my good woman; I'll give him a trial," the man of acres and sheep replied promptly knowing very well he could not lose much in the brief space of six or seven days.

The mother brought home the good news, saying as she hung up her winter shawl:

"Maurice *agra*, the work is hard an' you must be up early an' late. But you'll have three sthrong min to help you as your father—God rest him!—had before you. An' you know more about the sheep than they think you do. An' God, who left you without a father, will give you His hand to guide an' help you."

But little Maurice had high hopes for a day ahead; and the prospect of sheeptending in cold and heat, wet and dry, early and late, scattered his hopes like chaff in the wind. He wanted to go to college—he did not know when or how—to study law, and then to be an attorney, and later a councillor. He had a schoolmaster who rose above the birch and the beating system of those days, and spoke to him in a kindly, human way. All of them are risen above the system now. But one must praise the man who is ahead

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of his time; for his light is a light unto others, and opens pathways to fairer vistas.

Maurice was a sensible lad, however, and took the present for what it gave, and let the future wait for him away in the years. He was already in the "second stage of sixth" class in the national schools, and spoke English with remarkable accuracy.

"Mother, I was thinking of something else for myself, but I see I must put that by for the present. To-morrow morning I'll begin tending the sheep; and, as I have a little time now, I want to see Mr. Crimmins, the teacher, after school is let out."

"Yes, Maurice. An' be back for supper, a go to bed early; for there's a long, hard day ahead of you to-morrow."

The lad promised, and passed out of the house.

John Crimmins, the school-teacher, was a bachelor of forty-five, who lived in a neat cottage about a quarter of a mile away from the school-house. Old Mrs. Doyle, a woman of sixty-four, who was all alone in the world, kept house for Crimmins,—and kept it well, you may be sure. She had a motherly way with her, and looked upon the teacher as a son, and John looked upon her as a mother. It was a pleasant arrangement for both of them, and made life run smoothly enough.

When Maurice reached the cottage, Crimmins had just got home from school. He was most friendly in his greetings to his promising scholar,



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and made him forget as much as possible the gap of distance between them. When one is full of a subject one comes out with it quickly and Maurice was full of fading visions and dying hopes.

"Mr. Crimmins, you have been very good to me all along, and you have helped me in a hundred ways."

"And, Maurice, I have told you a hundred times not to mention goodness or favors from me to you."

"Well, I can't help it this once; for I'm going."

"Going? Where, my dear?"

"To leave school."

"To leave school?"

The teacher waited for explanations.

"You know, now that my father is dead, I must fill his position or we must leave our little home. We can't do that; for we must live, and not beg. I learned a good deal morning and evening about taking care of the sheep from father. To-morrow I'll take up his work."

To Maurice's surprise and, perhaps, disappointment, the teacher had no regrets to offer over his stern fate.

"Evidently to take care of your mother and to keep the little home is the present duty. And the present duty is the first duty, Maurice. Don't worry about the future; for the little service of to-day takes care of the larger service of to-morrow."

"That's all fine talk," thought Maurice; "but fine talk never gets one a schooling."



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The teacher had more to add:

"Maurice, keep up the studies,—the Latin, the reading of English authors,—and write a composition sometimes. I'll help you."

And straightway this man of axioms wrote down a schedule of work for his shepherd pupil and promised to help him along.

Maurice went off in better spirits than he had come; for, in spite of drudgery and long vigils, his dream was not blotted out forever, though it was far away.

To tell of his daily round of work—keeping guard and count of the sheep, warding off disease, and fighting it out when it entered the fold; his long walks from end to end of the wide estate; his watchfulness to protect the interests of his master; his tact in getting those under him to render full and careful service,—to tell all this would be to repeat the story of many another lad born at the base of the mountain, who, because he longed for larger vision, could not be gainsaid, and climbed to the summit. There were, in his watch, periods of lull, when he sat under a tree and pored over his Latin, or worked a problem in mathematics, or read the books loaned to him by his teacher. There were many occasions, too, when the teacher himself happened along and removed difficulties from before the active lad, or showed him new ways. It was like fighting one's path against a high wind on a treeless plain, this battling against circumstance. Maurice liked it, waxed stronger of purpose under

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the force of it, and saw his dream come nearer day by day. But for one opposing force he would have advanced so joyously as almost to forget he was a sheep-tender.

Sir Robert Ferendale had three sons and as many daughters. Five of these children one may dismiss without a word or a nod, as they had no relations whatever with the young dreamer of dreams. The second son, who carried his father's name, was about a year and a half Maurice's senior. Like his brothers and sisters, he had a private teacher, following the traditional ideas of "gentleman born." Probably he was clever enough—one is not concerned. Doubtless he made progress in his studies—it is not so important. But what surprises one even now is that this young, pampered, petted boy, with the way of life rosy before him, could stoop to notice with envy a lad who ran barefoot about his father's fields and wrestled with his father's sheep. Yet he did. The reason for his jealousy is simple enough.

On three occasions his own father, in his presence, praised the grit and serious manner of Maurice. Twice the talented young minister, an Oxford man, who occupied the manse close by the estate, spoke at dinner of the "wonderful eyes of Sir Robert's shepherd lad." A lady whose flighty horse Maurice had held for a little spoke of the "remarkable working boy who took care of the sheep." Then Maurice's talents were spoken of once or so, and Lady Ferendale said

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she wished "Master Bob had as bright a head as young Ahern."

From then on Robert Ferendale, Jr., seemed to have but one aim in his young life—to keep in the low dust Master Maurice Ahern, Jr., official guardian of his sire's sheep. It was an unequal contest, you may be sure. Poor Maurice had to grin and be silent while the rich young gentleman raged and abused him. He might have inflicted bodily punishment on young Ferendale for Maurice was known as a hard hitter at school. But he had a mother, and it would be small satisfaction to her if some time he were to say: "Mother, I have made Master Robert Ferendale's face black and blue with my fists. I am glad of it, too, although I must give up the sheep and get out of the house." It was an unequal contest, therefore. For if a man's hands are tied behind his back, a brave opponent may smite him with impunity.

Young Master Robert would say, as he galloped his pony across the fields to where Maurice was branding a sheep:

"You insolent dog, don't you see you're in my way? Move off, you beggar!"

Maurice would move away a little, though there were acres of field on either side of him for the young gentleman to pass.

Again, young Ferendale might come upon him during the brief periods he snatched for study.

"You worthless brat! Do you suppose my father pays you and gives you a house, in order

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to have you spend your time reading? You ignorant peasant! I'd like to know what you want books for?"

Maurice would put the little volume in his pocket and glide away to another section of the field.

He might have stopped the persecution if he had complained of the pampered boy to his father; for Ferendale was a strict man, who would accept no nonsense from his children. But, with the instinct of his race against "spy" and "informer," he could never bring himself to lodge a complaint. All the same, his young mind planned revenge, and his young heart longed for the day when his turn would come.

When Maurice was in his eighteenth year, John Crimmins' housekeeper died. Owing to the careful tutelage of the teacher and his own patient work, Maurice was ready to go away somewhere to begin his study of law. But he had not enough money to carry him through, nor did he see any prospect of getting it. Then the unexpected happened, and John Crimmins offered the position of housekeeper to his mother, and told Maurice to make ready to cross the Channel to take up the studies of his profession in England. Some days later Mrs. Ahern began her new duties, when Maurice was gone to the land of the oppressor. Robert Ferendale, Jr., had taken up the study of law in a select school some time before.

The years went their swift way, and fate or circumstance or what not at last brought Robert

## ROUND ABOUT HOME

Ferendale, Q. C., and Maurice Ahern, Q. C., into conflict. The former sheep-tender remembered the burning insults of days gone by, you may be sure; for personal wrong sometimes leaves a deep, red wound that time does not heal. The trial in which they both appeared as celebrated opponents is so well remembered that one need only offer the merest outline.

Smithfield was an "emergency man" placed over the farms of two evicted tenants some miles outside Ardee. The landlord of these tenants was an "absentee," who spent most of his time in keeping up with the races, the yachts, and those games of chance which are a part of the pastime of the "idle rich." He gave no thought to the struggling peasants who were trying to eke out a living and to hold up under the crushing weight of the rents. Probably the landlord did not know who they were, and did not care to know. He was a hard, bad spendthrift at best; and the agent he employed to collect his rents was no better than himself. Two tenants were evicted for nonpayment of rent, and this Smithfield from somewhere was sent to occupy one of the houses and take care of both farms.

An "emergency man" at his highest was a hateful beast, whose presence defiled the abandoned hearth, whose very shadow was unholy on the land. Smithfield was the most offensive of a very offensive tribe. He swaggered and put on the airs of a gentleman, and by and by told the two "peelers" sent to guard him to go home, as



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he could take care of himself. The poorest beggar on the road would neither salute him nor answer his salutation. He drank freely and his swagger rose to insolence. But the people had no mind to borrow more trouble than they had already, and let him go his way.

One evening, Margaret Sheehy, a young woman of fine appearance, was coming home from the dressmaker's at Ardee and was met by Smithfield. She fought the fight of her race for the priceless treasure of her sex, and was found insensible on the road an hour later. When the people heard of the outrage their anger leaped out in burning tongues of fire. Next morning the police found Smithfield dead in the exact spot where the girl was found, with three bullets lodged in his head. Margaret Sheehy had three brothers, who were at once placed under arrest, charged with the deed. There was a great deal of talk about circumstantial evidence among the attorneys, which the laymen could not follow. The concrete facts were the death of Smithfield, the arrest of the Sheehy brothers, and the great trial at Limerick.

Young, rich and brilliant Robert Ferendale, Q. C., was to prosecute for the Crown. Everybody expected that: he was a landlord's son. Young, brilliant, but not so rich, Maurice Ahern, Q. C., was retained by the defence. Everybody expected that, too: he was of the people, and proud of it. And you may be sure the people were proud of him. Now, if ever, his services would be needed. One might call up the fine



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rhetoric of Mr. Macaulay on his Warren Hastings' trial to describe the time and the scene, but one must surely be caught with the purloined property. At any rate, the courtroom held all it could hold, and out beyond it the streets were packed with people.

In Robert Ferendale's opening speech there were finish of language, grace of gesture, and wealth of discouraging testimony. One does not remember the points after so many years; but a distinct impression remains that the distinguished councillor had the rope around the necks of the Sheehy boys and it needed only the hangman to finish them. He was sarcastic, he thundered invective against a lawless people till one wondered if he would not hang them all; he appealed to the jury to stand for law and righteousness as against cold-blooded murder in the broad highway. He wept some as he spoke of the blameless man away from home, rendering a legitimate service in the face of boycott and intimidation. When he ended at last, many a man and many a woman said, "God have mercy on thim poor boys! Sure they're as good as dead an' gone!"

There was a whispering among the solicitors and the white-wigged councillors, and many nodded, and many more shook their heads. Indeed, among the high and the low, it looked hard for the three Sheehy boys sitting silent and solemn on the prisoners' dock. And a man might cry a bit, and not be ashamed of it either, to see the crushed and broken parents of the three

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stalwart lads, and their sweet-faced sister close beside them. But often in the darkest hour the sun leaps out and scatters the clouds.

Maurice Ahern, Q. C., rose with fine self-possession, and there was a very perceptible buzz of excitement in the courtroom.

"My Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury."

He seemed like a fine rider astride a horse that at a word would leap into space and annihilate miles by the minute. But he did not urge his steed yet. Rather he walked his charger, Language, with ease and grace, bowing and paying compliments as he went.

"My Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury: The distinguished counsel who has assumed the responsibility of the Crown at this trial has more than measured up to his previous reputation as a master in the craft of matching words. He is brilliant and resourceful, and has captivated the fancy of the jury and of the crowded courtroom; and, I am free to confess, he has captivated me also. If matchless language and exquisite finish of voice were to decide between him and me, between the three prisoners at the bar and the dead Smithfield, between guilt and innocence, the case might well rest here. But, Gentlemen of the Jury, there are issues that even eloquence can not tide over; minds that beauty of language can not sing to slumber; clamoring rights that crushing invective and picturesque irony can not hush into silence. Above all, there is a just God" (here the young councillor lifted his right hand

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high above him), "whose truth is eternal and must prevail, who holds rich and poor alike in the hollow of His hand, and who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness."

Then his charger cantered, and later galloped, and finally flew. How like a prophet was this man tearing to tatters circumstance after circumstance till there was not a shred of it left! How puny—to mix the figure—was the polish of Ferendale, Jr. before the giant blows of this towering man! How every bit of adverse testimony fell into dust with the strokes of his sledge! How the jurymen listened, with extended necks and parted lips, as he sent home every telling circumstance, every crushing weight that battered down the feeble breastworks of his opponent! There were demonstrations and the court rapped for order.

Suddenly he swerved from his thought:

"And who is this Smithfield? 'A blameless man,' the worthy council says, 'away from home, rendering a legitimate service in the face of boycott and intimidation.' A blameless man? Does a blameless man beat an innocent young woman into insensibility to steal away her virtue? Does a blameless man wait for an innocent girl on the highroad and beat her down in the darkness of night? Is this the worthy council's concept of blamelessness, of chivalry, of modern knight-errantry?"

He went on and on and on. At one moment men's eyes blazed fire, at another tears were streaming down their rough, weather-beaten faces.

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He made witnesses contradict themselves, and pointed out discrepancy after discrepancy in the testimony. Half of them were perjurers before he had finished the cross-examination, and the other half did not wish to stand sponsor for what they had at first testified. Young Ferendale objected here and there as a matter of duty, but this mad rider could neither be reined nor thrown. On he went to the bitter end, and closed with a peroration that put the courtroom into a frenzy of enthusiasm.

The judge's charge was brief and, to all intents, a verdict. The jury filed out, and returned in just two minutes with the words, "Not guilty." The wild joy that followed one passes over as a matter of course. There are scenes and moments and feelings that always lose in the telling.

Coming out from the court, a warm hand clasped the hand of the now imperishable Maurice Ahern. It was that of John Crimmins.

"Maurice, Maurice, I'm proud of you! It was a victory for ten lives!"

Maurice returned the pressure of his old friend and teacher.

"My dear old teacher, my dear old friend, you share in the triumph! It is yours as well as mine. And isn't it worth waiting for all the years?"

## THE BELLMAN OF ARDEE.

HE might have been a Queen's Councillor if he had had schooling; he might have been a Member of Parliament if he had had schooling and influence; he might have been a parish priest if he had had schooling and a vocation. But he had neither schooling, influence nor vocation; so he was not a Q. C. nor an M. P. nor a P. P., but merely a town bellman.

One must not infer from this that Jacky McCann had wasted his substance, missed his calling and lived in vain. No doubt it was intended he should be a bellman from the beginning, and not serve her Majesty, the people, or the Church. At any rate, Jacky himself had no heartaches on that score. He had no regrets over lost hopes, no looking back to a cross in the road where he might have taken a different direction and reached a fairer destiny. He was as happy as a man could be here below, and what more should one want?

Jacky's calling probably needs explanation. He was not a maker of bells, nor a clerk of the parish who rang the people to Mass on Sundays and days of devotion. Rather his field of work embraced what is done to-day through the advertising columns of a newspaper, through billboards, and through the manifold other means of reaching



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the public. The bellman was present at every fair within a radius of twelve or fifteen miles, and was the vehicle that carried information to the people assembled from near and far. You had fifty acres of upland hay at auction and you wanted buyers. Straightway you went to Jacky McCann, and secured his services at a fixed rate for an hour or a half hour, as the case might be. Jacky got the facts correctly stated, took his handbell and made his way to the street. Once there, he swung his bell back and forth with fine rhythm, and secured a measure of attention. Then he began in an rotund voice that would do credit to Daniel O'Connell himself:

"At auction.—Fifty acres of prime upland hay in the Knockfernah meadows, three miles west of Adare. The auction will take place on the morning of Wednesday, July the 27th, beginning at ten o'clock. Quick sale and ready money! Remember the date! John Coughlin, auctioneer."

Back and forth through the town he went, varying the phrasing of his announcement to catch the fancy of his listeners. He rang his bell betimes to make a noise, to secure attention, to get his breath, and to break the monotony. When he had served his time of this announcement, there were usually two or three more waiting for him; in which event he announced them, as he said, "like three staves of a song, one after the other." For instance, the first would be:

"Strayed or stolen.—A red milch cow with a white face, from O'Donovan's farm, near Croom.



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Any one giving information that will lead to the finding of the animal will be liberally rewarded by Michael O'Donovan, owner of the same." Ding-dong, ding-dong!

The second proclamation would roll forth as follows:

"The great horse races of Newcastle will begin on July the 9th, to continue for two days. Special trains will run from Limerick and Tralee bearing the wealth and beauty of all Munster. Splendid prizes for the winning horses. The Races! The Races! The Races at Newcastle!" Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Finally, the third might be a political hint:

"The election of Poor Law Guardians will be held next Monday. Do not forget the name of William Clancy in choosing an honest man." Ding-dong, ding-dong!

It would be an overstatement to say that Jacky's voice and his bell and his sum of information held everybody at the fair of Ardee spellbound. Cattle-buyers argued and offered to "split the difference"; sellers argued and refused to do so, just as if Jacky's voice and bell were away down in Co. Belfast. So, too, the go-between who tried to close the deal with buyer and seller. The buyer, a man from Cork or Limerick let us say, would leave the seller, a shrewd, cattle farmer from the rich grazing lands of the Golden Vale. Yes, the buyer would leave him for good and all, to repent for his folly of heart in not jumping at his offer. But the farmer would let him

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go, knowing he would be glad to return if called. Then the go-between, the split-the-difference man, who might be a chance onlooker, but more often a friend of the buyer or of the seller—you could never tell which,—would run after the buyer and call him back. The buyer would return reluctantly, the go-between forcing him, as it were. Negotiations might be reopened in some such way as this:

“Yerra what ails ye? An’ sure there isn’t so much between ye that ye can’t fix it up.”

“Faith, then, there is,” the seller would say with dogged insistence.

Again the cattle-buyer would turn as if to leave, dazed at such conduct. The go-between would hold him, would face the buyer and would put to him this solemn question:

“Now, Jim, we’re all min here, so answer like a man. What’s the lowest you’ll take for the four cows?”

“Forty-four pounds, an’ not a ha’ penny less.”

Then he would turn to the buyer and ask with like solemnity:

“What’s the highest money you can offer for the four cows?”

The buyer would protest by the tombs of all the Irish Kings that he didn’t want the cows very much, anyway; but, in order not to make futile the efforts of an honest man, he would be willing to make a sacrifice and pay forty pounds.

“There’s only a matther of four pounds between

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ye," the go-between would declare hopefully.

Then he would catch the palm of the right hand of the buyer and the palm of the right hand of the seller, would strike their palms with his palm, and exclaim as if inspired:

"Split the difference!"

Not at all! Couldn't think of it! Sure they'd both be out money. The cows weren't worth it, or were worth twice the amount. To shorten a long tale, buyer and seller, after much argument and rebuttal, affirmation and denial, agreed on forty-two pounds for the four cows, with a shilling apiece for luck money. Outwardly, each appeared to be giving his home and holding in fee simple to the other, though one may reasonably doubt if really they felt that way.

In the midst of a hundred scenes like this, where buyer and seller watched, waited, argued, protested, agreed or disagreed, Jacky passed all day long. He dodged great bunches of cattle that were driven down to the little railway station, where a long row of "wagons" stood waiting on a side track to receive them. There was a vast deal of shouting and cracking of whips and bellowing of cows, and generally an appearance of confusion, out of which would issue order in time. The thimbleman was at the fair, too, passing a tiny ball of lead from one thimble to another. You paid a penny to guess under which thimble he hid the ball, and got three pennies back if you guessed right. Many a lad who thought he was "smart" tried to triple his

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money, and got the laugh from bystanders for his pains.

There was the ballad singer lilting a ballad of twenty-one stanzas or so, telling the fortunes and death of "Shane O'Grady, the boy of Ballyo." Many a lad bought the song for a penny, then listened to the performer for a while, trying to catch the "chune"; for there was no such luxury as musical score. If he had a "good ear," he caught it; if he had not, he caught it partially or not at all, and sang it afterward to a "chune" of his own. It made very little difference either way. There was a stand of upright whips with brass-covered ends. You paid a penny for six rings and took six chances to lodge a ring on any one of the whips. Sometimes Fortune favored you; but the owner of the stand did not leave Fortune a very wide field for her favors. As the day waned, the sold cattle housed away in the "wagons" were taken to Limerick in a special "goods" train, to be shipped later to more distant parts. The unsold were driven back to the sweet grass of their native fields. The bellman still rang on, and gave forth his items of news, never weary of himself, never weary of the weariness of others.

"But how about the tipsy, turbulent Celt in the waning day?" you alliteratively ask. "Is he not a product of the fair? And the blackthorn sticks? And the fights? And the broken heads? Surely the picture is not complete." Even if these items, singly or collectively, were a "product"

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of the fair, they would not add anything to the picture, if you chose to call it so. But they were not a product nor an offshoot nor an aftermath, nor, in philosophical phrase, a necessary consequence.

The fact is, they never were, except in misty tradition, and as an additional foulness in the already foul pages of a few self-styled Celtic "humorists." You probably have heard of them. If you have not, rejoice; for you have not missed anything that will add a cubit to your æsthetic stature. One hears and reads of riots at "our national pastime"; of umpires assaulted; of mob violence at conventions; of beating and stabbing and blood and violence and murder in our cities and small towns. Yet, somehow, they do not live in misty tradition. But at the Irish fair and market and public meeting, men must drink and fight and bleed. We have always imagined so, and to imagine otherwise would be to set aside the old ideas to which we have grown accustomed, and to put on the new which may not suit so well. Such conditions may have existed fifty years ago. One does not live from the beginning. But those who lived then say they did not; and they heard from those gone before that such things did not exist in their generation. And so on to the days of the Milesians, if you like. No doubt there was a quenching of thirst and loud talk and a row and a fight now and then. But why call in question the peace and sobriety and general right living of



## ROUND ABOUT HOME

the great many, because you have heard of or seen the weakness or waywardness or foolishness of a very few?

The fair of Ardee was all over about four o'clock. There were few strangers in the town at five; by six, scarcely any. It was a quiet town, and the police might be up in the barracks, for all they had to do. A few of them marched up and down the street, to work up an appetite in order to eat with more relish the good dinner which the taxes of poor people paid for. Otherwise they might have been in bed, so far as anybody cared.

Jacky McCann's stock of trade vanished with the vanishing crowd. Usually he lingered till five o'clock; though he had no proclamations to proclaim, for there were scarcely any listeners to listen. Then, catching hold of his bell by the tongue, he disappeared up a short side street to his snug home, where his wife—a quiet little woman—had a hot supper waiting for him.

"I'm back, little woman; an' 'tis tired I am thrampin' it up an' down the whole day."

"Wisha, Jacky, sure I often tell you we have enough laid by now to keep us for the rest of our days. So why don't you rest and give over?"

Jack always took up these last words of his kind helpmate and sang them with such heart as to make you say, "Rise it!"—

Give over, Wild Rover, put your money in store;  
And you never will be a Wild Rover no more.

Whether it was because two negatives make



## ROUND ABOUT HOME

an affirmative, or because he had to follow his natural bent, at any rate, Jacky never consented to "give over." It was only when age and rheumatism caught him that he remained at home. But for a long time, like an imprisoned bird, he hoped for a day when he would be free again. And when finally the truth was forced upon him that the fairs must go on month after month in regular rotation and that he must remain away, he took the handbell from where it hung and stowed it away in the loft for safekeeping. As he did so he said to his helpmate:

"Little woman, if I go first, ring my bell three times in honor of the Blessed 'Trinity, an' three times in honor of the Holy Family, an' three times in honor of the virtues of Faith, Hope an' Charity. After that throw it into the deepest bed of the River Deel; for I'll have no use for it up in heaven. An' if you go first, I'll do the same thing for you. 'Then I hope I'll soon follow.'"

## AROUND THE FIRE.

YE may say what ye like, but ghosts walk in the night just as people on this side of the grave walk in the day."

Tade Clancy put a fresh coal in his pipe and spoke with solemnity. No one of the four men who sat around the fire that night felt inclined to contradict him, even though his remark would seem to have been occasioned by a previous dispute. Neither, you may be sure, did any of his four children, whose seniority of birth gave them the traditional privilege of staying up a little later than the rest of the flock, nor his hard-working wife, who at that moment was remaking a dress for one of the little ones and had not her mind on spirit-land. Indeed, she was too busy with the cares of the present.

Tade Clancy was steeped in ghost lore. Spirits lived closer to him than did his struggling fellows on this earth. His imagination ran riot with the vision of them. In every silence of the dark he heard their voices, long-drawn and plaintive; he saw their forms moving about in the neighborhood of old castles, fallen abbeys, graveyards, and sometimes along a dark, deserted piece of road. He spoke of them with finality and reverence.

## ROUND ABOUT HOME

When you heard him, you would feel inclined to say: "This man could not speak with such show of conviction if what he says were founded on a pretence."

Every little group he joined the ghosts joined with him; every house he entered the ghosts followed. Never a man nor a woman died, whose going was at all sudden or peculiar, but came back to him with a word or a message. He heard the banshee in every sigh of the wind,—now blending with it, now distinct and high, now faint and far, now almost lost. He was so much in the company of ghosts that one might wonder if he were not a ghost himself. Once when a neighbor said so, Tade made answer:

"The ghosts are on the hill and on the plain. An' sometimes the hill man sees thim, an' sometimes the man on the plain. But all don't see thim; for they don't show themselves to all. An' I'm no ghost that I'll tell you, but only one o' thim they come to."

Around the fire that night the scene was singularly suited to Tade's train of thought. The turf sods were banked high in the hearth; the sparks leaped up and vanished with the smoke through the chimney; the group was silent and meditative; the click of the old clock in one of the back rooms measured the pauses between Tade's solemn words; fitful gusts of wind shook the bare tree limbs, and made the windows rattle dismally; the occasional patter of the rain seemed like the dancing of fairy feet.

## ROUND ABOUT HOME

"Wisha, God rest Mick Hannon's sowl!" Tade began reflectively; "an' 'tis a night like this reminds me of him. I was ridin' down the Creela road on the horse I bought at the autumn fair of Limerick, an' a fine horse he was. 'Twas about tin o'clock of a Saturday night, an' the wind blowin', the trees sighin', an' the heavens weepin', just like ye hear abroad now. Ne'er a sign of a star was in the sky, nor a thrace o' the moon at all, at all. I was cantherin' along pretty lively; for the hour was gettin' on, an' the darkness isn't for min to be out in. Just whin I got to Hasset's lodge, at this side o' Downey's 'cross, a man walked out through the closed gates, with ne'er a noise nor a sign of any kind to show that he opened thim. He sthooed in the road in front o' me in a flood o' light, with his two hands stretched out."

Here Tade and his hearers lifted their hats, the same as if they were passing by the priest or the chapel gate, while the children blessed themselves in holy fear. Tade remained silent for a little. There was a hush in the wind at that moment, and the hound out in the car shed howled plaintively. Mrs. Clancy at her sewing ejaculated piously:

"God guard and keep thim without house or home on a night like this!"

"I coaxed the horse," continued Tade, "to move on past the vision there in the middle o' the road. He picked his way gintly like a lady in a muddy boreen, and thrimbled like a spray of ivy. As for meself, I thought every minute

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the sowl would go out o' me body from fright. Just as we got on the side o' the road opposite the man, a voice spoke that seemed not his voice but a voice from far away:

“‘Tade Clancy, stop there!’ If the glory of heaven was waitin’ in front o’ me I couldn’t open me mouth nor lift me hand to make the horse gallop away. An’ faix the animal himself sthooed as sthill as a statue.

“‘Tade Clancy,’ says the voice again, ‘do you know me?’

“Then I found me tongue an’ looked at the man. I says: ‘By gor I do. You’re Mick Hannon, the son of Paddy Hannon, of Ballinagool.’

“‘I was,’ says he, ‘but I am no more. To-morrow mornin’ early they’ll find me dead body out from Athery, at the bind o’ the white road. A side-car sthruck me at the dark turn, an’ the driver was the servant o’ Hasset, the landlord, an’ Hasset himself was sittin’ in the opposite side. An’ whin they saw what they did, they galloped away and left me dead on the road. Now, ‘Tade Clancy,’ says he, ‘many a man an’ many a woman about these parts will say I was dhrunk and died in me sin. For ’tis their way an’ the way o’ the the world. But ’tis bad for the livin’ to spake hard o’ the dead. An’ I wasn’t dhrunk, an’ me sowl wasn’t red with sin; for I was back at the chapel this day an’ the hand o’ the priest absolved me o’ me sins an’ they are washed away. An’, ‘Tade Clancy, you silence the tongues of thim that spake against me, an’ give the money



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they find in me pocket for Masses, for I need thim where I am. An' know that it will not come well by thim that left me deserted there in the dark o' the night.'

"All at once he vanished, an' there I was alone with me horse on the side o' the highway. Whin I came home here the childer were all in bed, but herself was up sittin' by the fire waitin' for the first bate o' the horse's hoof on the stony road. An' whin I came in she says:

"'Yerra, Tade, what ails you? An' is it hurt you are?'

"'Woman,' says I, 'I'm not hurt, thanks be to the great God! But don't ask me any more questions now, only let us kneel down together an' say the Rosary for poor young Mick Hannon's sowl.'

"'For Mick Hannon's sowl! Sure you must be taken lave of your sinses. Didn't I see Mick Hannon goin' to Athery a little afther dinner?'

"'He's dead an' gone, an' that's all. So let us kneel down an' say the Rosary.'

"So we said the Rosary and the prayers for the dead, while the wind kep' on wailin' an' moanin' outside. 'Twas a long time before I slep', an' whin I did all night long I saw the outstretched arms an' the light an' the pale face in the middle o' the road.

"Early next mornin' the news flew like wildfire that Mick Hannon was found dead at the turn o' the white road outside o' Athery. An' there was terror an' wondher an' talk. But I sthilled



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the tongues o' thim that gossiped about the poor boy, an' had his brother Jim give the money found in his pocket to the priest to say Masses for his poor sowl. An' may the great God have mercy on him, an' may Our Lady put her blue mantle about him an' carry him home to heaven! I needn't tell ye how ould Hasset was drowned at a watherin' place three summers ago, an' how a short time afterward his servant boy was killed; for ye already know."

"But, Tade, why didn't you tell the peelers how Mick came by his death, an' make ould Hasset an' his servant pay for their deed?" asked one of the men.

"Because the ghost o' Mick Hannon didn't tell me, that's why. 'Tis for us to do what the spirits tell us; no more an' no less."

"Well," declared Maurice O'Connor, looking thoughtfully into the fire, "it may be all well an' good to talk about ghosts, but I hope the Lord will preserve me from ever seein' one."

"You shouldn't pray for that," replied Clancy; "for the ghosts mane no harm to any one, only to warn him or ask his help. Sure you remimber ould Ned Condon that died up at Kilcolman fifteen years ago."

Yes, they all remembered; and Tade had another story, which, however, did not at all illustrate what he said.

"We all know ould Ned Condon was a miser, God forgive me for sayin' anything bad o' the dead! But it's no sacret that he was close-fisted

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and stingy, though he had plenty and more o' the world's goods. He never would let his wife give an apronful o' praties nor a dish o' flour to a beggar. He wouldn't let his five childer go to school, but kep' thim at home to slave an' dhrag for him out in the garden. An' while the childer of other people wint off with their strap o' books in the mornin', ould Ned Condon kep' his childer out workin' from early to late. An' the priest tould him to give his family an education; but he wouldn't be said or led by the priest, but spint his days heapin' up money and his nights countin' it, an' made slaves of his childer. Thin he died of a strange disase, an' the best docthor in Limerick couldn't tell what it was. An' the divil a much o' funeral he had, an' ne'er a wake at all. An' whin he was gone, the childer who had grown up not able to write their names hated the mention o' their ould father. The little woman died heartbroken at the wicked ways o' thim; but she had the priest an' was buried dacent. When she wint, the boys an' the girls were worse than ever, havin' no human voice now to gainsay or advise thim. The boys dhrank an' the girls were rough in their manners. The money ould Ned Condon counted night afther night wint like wather through a sieve; an' 'tis a known fact, as twenty min o' the parish could tell ye, night afther night, whin the boys an' girls were away, the ghost o' the miser would sit on the stile at the back of his house, moanin' and lamentin' the loss of his money. An' many a

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time I heard him meself, but I never saw him, for he was not allowed to appear. The boys an' the girls are all gone now, an' the farm belongs to other people. But the house is haunted; for hardly a night goes by they don't hear strange noises an' the moanin' and wailin' o' Ned Condon the miser."

"To bed with ye, childer, an' don't mind yer father fillin' yer heads with his wild tales!" Mrs. Clancy admonished the four privileged ones, with a yawn; for she was tired herself, poor woman! When the children had gone up to bed, Tade took issue with his helpmate.

"Woman, you talk in a sthrange way o' thim that be dead; an' 't isn't right to make little o' holy subjects."

"Faix, Tade, you're not the Pope o' Rome yet, that we have to believe every word you say. An' you're not the bishop o' Limerick either."

Then the man of ghosts turned and addressed his wife, while she still held her hand on the knob of the door through which she would presently enter her room.

"Woman, I'm not Pope nor bishop, but answer me this. Didn't they find Mick Hannon dead in the mornin' with money in his pocket, as I tould you?"

"They did."

"An', later on, didn't ould Hasset an' his servant die as I mentioned?"

"They did."

"An' didn't I tell you I saw the ghost o' Mick Hannon?"

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"You did."

"An' didn't I see the ghost?"

"That I don't know, Tade; for I wasn't there to see. An' all that you tould me could happen, an' still you might not see the ghost o' Mick Hannon. I never saw ghosts meself an' I never want to see any. Our Lord and His Blessed Mother an' the holy angels an' saints are enough for me." With that Mrs. Clancy quietly closed the door behind her, said her prayers, and sought a quiet rest from her hard, patient toil of the long day.

The mystic circle was broken. Tade Clancy's mood was gone. The veil of mystery that surrounded him was thrown apart for the present. Whether he saw and spoke with spirits one does not know for a certainty. But there were times when circumstances and coincidences were strange and difficult to explain. Withal, it was well for him to have so sensible and so practical a wife to keep his feet on the ground when his dreams lifted him too high among the hills. It was well for his well-kept and well-fed children, too, that God blessed them with a mother whose ways were not too remote from the workaday ways of earth. For while it might be well to have a father who half lived in spirit-land and shared of his visions with them, still they needed the practical head and the practised hand of a mother to teach them the good and the useful lessons of life.

The circle was broken; the mood was gone.

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The men lit their pipes anew and passed out to their homes. Tade bade them good-night and safe journey and bolted the kitchen door. He raked the ashes on the fire, which now burned low. He varied his prayers from audible exclamations to gentle whispers; then blessed himself piously, kissed the crucifix on his beads and put out the light. The wind still moaned among the tree limbs and the rain swished with every gust. Every human voice was stilled within the house, and the beasts without were safe in their bedding of straw. The moon and stars were still imprisoned behind the black clouds, but the angels of God were keeping the watches of the night.

## MOLL MAGEE.

MOLL MAGEE was a polite beggar with a distinct personality. This is important when you come to know that nearly all Irish beggar women are of a mould. They travel from house to house in humble fashion, thankful if they get little, and decidedly thankful if they get much,—“Then pray a string of prayers,” Jim Donnelly used to say, “as long as from Belfast Lough to Bantry Bay, an’ you never can tell whether they mane thim or not.” Probably Jim was wrong in this instance; for there is very little doubt that every beggar woman who lifted her voice, lifted her heart also.

Moll Magee had a personality; and because of her personality, and not because of her prayers, she was known from Abbeyfeale to Cappamore. She dropped in to see Johnny Delaney, a bachelor of forty-five, who had a snug house and a snug farm. His sister, a woman of thirty-seven, “kept the house” and Johnny kept the farm.

“Yeëra, Johnny,” Moll said, “aren’t you married yet?”

Johnny abbreviated the first person of the verb and answered:



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"I amn't."

"An' why?"

"They don't come to me."

"Then why don't you go after thim?"

"Herself is here."

"Manin' your sister Kate?"

"Ay!"

"An' why doesn't Kate get married?"

"Yerra, why? Tell me, an' I'll tell you."

"Kate!" Moll called.

"Yes."

"Come out here."

Kate came out from one of the rooms where she had been busy sewing. It may seem strange that Moll Magee, a beggar woman, could so order people about in their own houses. But Moll Magee had a personality.

"Kate, aren't you married yet?"

Kate abbreviated the second person of the verb and answered:

"I aren't."

"An' why?"

"Because nobody asks."

"They would if you wanted."

"Yes, but he's here."

"Manin' Johnny?"

"Ay!"

Johnny had already gone out to the apple orchard.

"An' why doesn't Johnny get married?"

"'Tis a wise man could tell you that."

"Now, Kate, Shrove is comin'. An' you'll be

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waitin' an' waitin' till you're an ould woman like me; an' Johnny will be waitin' till he's as ould as me ould man when he died,—the heavens be his bed this day! Let ye hurry up the both o' ye, an' Father Tracey will be mighty glad of a double weddin'."

Now, it never entered the head of honest Kate Delaney that Moll was winning her way by the subtlest kind of flattery; for Kate was a simple girl even if she was burdened with a few extra years. People like to be flattered, if one knows how. Kate had a good heart, and never let a beggar pass out over the threshold with an empty sack. For all that, Moll exercised the gentle art, and, by the same token, got more than any four others combined. So when Kate gave her flour and potatoes and some ripe apples and a little package of tea, Moll ejaculated:

"Wisha, may God Almighty bless an' keep you, child! An' may the Holy Mother look down on you with love from heaven!"

However much or little Moll received, this was the sum and substance of her prayer. And when one stops to consider, brief as her prayer was, she asked for much.

To tell the truth, Moll never looked like a woman who could make prayers. No doubt she had faith, but her faith was down in the deeps and rarely floated on the surface. She must have been sixty years, although she could be ten less. She was a beggar partly by necessity, partly by choice. When she was a young girl

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she married a soldier in the English army,—a rare occurrence among Irish girls. Her husband was a good enough man, but a private soldier does not save money. He gets so little, it is hardly worth while. Moll travelled through England, was with him in Africa and India; and if she was not rich, at least she saw the world. Let it be said, too, that her soldier husband never drank or gambled, and was kind to his young Irish wife. He got old and was pensioned. Moll had a longing for the land she had left, and, by some strange freak of fortune, they settled down in the little village of Knockfeen. The single pension was just enough to keep both, and they lived on happily enough till the "ould man" died of what Moll announced as "decline." The lone widow was a wanderer by nature; she had never learned to do any kind of work, so she did what was probably the best under the circumstances—became a sort of polite beggar.

Moll was tall and rather erect for her years. She had a thin white face that gave evidence of refinement, and grey eyes that could shoot sparks of fire on occasion. Her hands showed no traces of work or weather; her fingers were long and slender. She always wore her plain gold marriage ring.

Her wandering nature carried her over a vast stretch of country, so that she hardly ever called at the same place more than once a year. Then, too, people grew so fond of her wit and drollery

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she found it hard to make many calls during the course of a day. If she was successful in getting, it is sweet to remember that she was also generous in giving.

Once she met poor Dave Morgan, the Dummy of the Pike Road, coming home from the fair of Ardee. He looked so wan and worn, and his clothes were so tattered after his long day of unsuccessful broom-selling, that her heart melted. But she had her own breezy way of expressing it.

"Dave, you look like the scarecrow out in Hartigan's garden. You should get married an' settle down, an' not be wearin' your life away with thim brooms."

Then when Dave did not answer she added:

"God forgive me! I forgot the poor man was deaf as well as dumb."

She walked the remainder of the journey home with Dave, and gave him the flour and potatoes she had collected during the day, keeping just enough for her own "bite" that evening. Dave protested by gesture, but she brushed him aside, saying:

"Whist, you anashore! Sure I have a tongue that's a mile too long, an' can ask for more. But you have neither tongue nor ear."

Many another brisk deed of charity could be told of Moll Magee; but they are all recorded in heaven, in that book where the writing is never effaced.

To Father Tracey, Moll was the source of

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unfailing delight. Wherever and whenever he met her, he had to stop for a little banter, to which she always replied—with courteous dispatch.

"Moll, I declare you're looking younger every day." He paid this compliment one Friday morning when he met her during his walk.

"Faith, then, your reverence, 'tis just like you to remark on good looks."

"I hear you were up at Johnny Delaney's yesterday."

"I was, then, though I didn't think your reverence would know it so soon."

"And, Moll, is there any truth in it?" Father Tracey asked, with an air of mystery.

"Yerra, what do you mane, Father Tracey?"

"Faith, you know well enough what I mean, Moll," Father Tracey declared.

"Indeed then I don't, your reverence. An' if you say what it is I'll tell you."

"Well, I mean the match."

"Wisha, glory be to God! An' what match do you have in mind?"

"Between yourself and Johnny Delaney, of course. Sure all the parish is talking about it."

"Wisha, God forgive you, Father Tracey, an' to mention marriage between Moll Magee an' that little anashore! Sure I was married to me ould man once, an' that's enough. An' if I'd marry Johnny Delaney, I'd make him sell his farm an' buy ould horses an' a scrawny pony, an' then we'd go off an' be gypsies. Now, your reverence wouldn't like that; for Johnny is a



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good little man, an' goes to his duties, an' pays at all the collections."

"Speaking of duties, Moll, have you been to the 'railing' lately?"

"I was, then, just a month ago Sunday, your reverence."

"That's a long time ago, Moll."

"Yerra, your reverence wants to make a saint out of me, like Mary Connelly as goes every day since she lost her sight!"

The very idea of being a saint was terrible to Moll.

"Saint or no saint, come over Saturday."

"But to-day is Friday, an' it always takes a week to prepare."

"Well, start in to-night and be over to-morrow. That's the long and the short of it."

As she walked home to her little cabin, Moll declared to herself:

"Wisha, Father Tracey is getting very quare of late. After a while every dacent woman in the parish will be a saint."

Saturday, however, found Moll's tall form waiting her turn to undergo the ordeal of saintship.

The following Monday she had to leave for a long tour back in the mountains. She called in to Micky, the Fenian, on her way through Athery, for a pair of boots she had left him to repair. He had promised to have them ready by eight o'clock that morning; but, as usual, they were not ready, nor was Micky in any special hurry with them either. Micky and Father Tracey



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were the only two on earth to whom Moll spoke with guarded tongue. This morning her ire was up, however, and even with Micky she was not so guarded.

"Micky, an' if you'd stop your ould gab and your yarnin' with thim boys as comes in here, maybe you'd attend to the work of dacent people."

"Faith, Moll, you were at confession Saturday evenin', I hear, but you don't seem to be much the betther for it Monday mornin'."

Micky's remark was intended as a corrective, but it failed entirely.

"Micky, an' if I wasn't to confession Saturday, I'd give you another hump on your back, an' then you'd have two."

"If you keep on talkin' like that, Moll, you'll have a tongue on you as long as the handle o' Mike Hartigan's spade."

Moll had no time for debate, so she called for the previous question.

"Micky, why haven't you done me boots?"

"There's lots o' raison, Moll," answered Micky, hoping in the meantime to find one.

"Yerra, Micky, what raisons can you have? I have your word, haven't I?"

"You have," Micky agreed, thankful that he had yet another pause to search for a "raison."

"An' isn't your word your word?"

"Of course, woman,—of course!"

"Then why haven't you done me boots?"

"Time, for one thing," Micky declared, with a business air.

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"Time!" echoed Moll, with scorn. "What is time to you, I'd like to know? Don't you murder it by the minute an' by the hour an' by the day tellin' your ould lies to thim boys?"

Micky lost control, and presently the scene of battle changed from Micky's cobbling to Micky's veracity.

"They aren't lies, an' you know it."

"They are lies, an' you know betther."

"Moll Magee, I'm not goin' to let you assail me in me private character."

Micky's splendor of diction here shone out with conspicuous distinction.

"Who's assailin' what you call your 'private character'?"

"You are, who should know betther," answered Micky, his voice carrying the note of wounded feeling.

"Micky the Fenian," declared Moll, solemnly, "you know very well I didn't assail your character, as you say. I'm a dacent woman as never assails anybody. An' if you'll give me me boots, I'll go out and lave you."

"Woman, I forgive you!" Micky declared, with rare magnanimity. "Sit down there and I'll have thim done in two shakes of a lamb's tail."

Moll sat and Micky worked. Both kept silence by mutual compact. One must be truthful and say that a lamb might have shaken its tail many times before Micky finally said with triumph:

"Here you are, Moll, an' 'tis a long time since I worked so fasht!"

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"An' long till you will again. What's the price?"

"Sixpence, but I won't take it."

"You won't take it? An' why won't you take it?"

"You're of me profession, Moll, an' me service to you is what the docthers call professional coortesy." (Micky waved his hand with a grand flourish.) "You see, your ould man was a sojer—in the English army, but sthilla sojer; an' I was a Fenian, a sojer of Ireland. An', though he was the inimy of me land, I'll rinder him an' his mournin' widow the professional coortesy."

"Wisha, the divil run off with your brag an' your professional coortesy, Micky! But if you don't want the sixpence, I'll give it to thim that do."

As a matter of fact, when she went by the chapel on her way to the west, she put the coin in the poor box; then, strange as it may seem, she knelt down and said an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary" for Micky.

All told, Moll Magee was an odd mixture. Yet the compound was not unpleasant. If she had a racy tongue, she had a generous heart. If she could be sharp on occasion, she could also be exceedingly tender. When she flattered, it was more for the pleasure it gave her than for anything else. She could see the odd or the foolish, but she never played unduly upon it. In a word, she was a type of the race, of which there are many. And variety is the spice of a people as well as of life.

## GOD REST HIM, PADDY OWEN!

**H**IS full name was Patrick Owen MacMahon; Paddy Owen he was called. He was named Owen in Confirmation, although in Ireland the Confirmation name in spoken speech is as useless as the letter *p* in pneumonia. If you called yourself John Joseph or Michael Aloysius or Patrick Thomas, people would think you were going to start off to the seaside the next summer; and if you had such a combination as Alfred Wellington, they would say you were aiming at an English peerage. You were John, Joseph or Patrick when called upon to answer to your name in any official capacity; you were Johnny or Jack, Joe, Pat or Paddy in conversation with your equals and those above or below you.

Paddy Owen's mother had aspirations. She declared time and again in the hearing of the high and the low that her husband was a lineal descendant of the late distinguished Marshal MacMahon. There was no one in the north section of the county learned enough in pedigree to dispute her claim, although Micky the Fenian said he could. Mrs. MacMahon's own father's Christian name was Owen. Hence the name of the sainted

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Apostle of Ireland and her father's name and the name of the noted soldier seemed a worthy trinity with which to distinguish her first-born. She was a good woman, even if she did have aspirations. Aspirations are not sinful, but the Irish will overlook a big sin seven times a day and will not overlook a social aspiration once in seven years.

Mrs. MacMahon's life aim for her son was to preserve his name intact.

"Patrick Owen MacMahon," she would remark, "did you lunch this noon?"

The men resting a little out in the "haggard," before beginning the after-dinner threshing would joke and jibe till one got tired from laughing at them.

"Patrick Owen MacMahon," Jim Walsh would mimic, "did you ate a head of cabbage for your lunch this noon?" Another, in a falsetto voice, would add: "Patrick Owen MacMahon, will you tell your 'mamma' to come out here and rip the shaves of whate for the machine?" And finally: "Patrick Owen MacMahon, ye can all go to the ould boy with yer consate!"

There were three distinct stages in the retro-grade movement of Paddy Owen's name. First, there was Patrick Owen MacMahon, which endured some six weeks; second, Paddy Owen Mac, which endured six months; third, Paddy Owen which endured ever after. His mother and a few friends of hers always clung to Patrick Owen MacMahon. It was purely of scientific



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interest, however, like the names which botanists tag on to flowers.

In the after years Paddy Owen married and had one daughter who was called Catherine MacMahon. But tradition is as tenacious as tar, and Catherine MacMahon was changed to Kitty Owen. Kitty married a man from the "mountains." They lived happily enough, though not blessed with children, Paddy remaining with them till near the completion of his hundredth year, when God called him home. It is here our story opens.

To tell the truth, when the news that Paddy Owen was dead got abroad, there was no such sorrow as one feels over the loss of a young mother who leaves six or seven little ones after her. When a man reaches close to a hundred years he has lived long. He has had a full measure of time, and should be prepared to pass out to eternity. All credit to Paddy Owen, for he left life without a sigh or a tear. He "had the priest," and no rite was wanting that helps to mellow and sweeten death. The neighbors near about quit cutting the hay, or whatever other early summer work they were at.

There was a warm sun the day he died. The crows loafed in the air, the cattle loafed in the fields, the stream loafed as it stole between its sedge-grown banks to the lazy river. And, between ourselves, the men round about were glad (since it had to be) that Paddy Owen was dead, so they themselves could loaf for a day.



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Though the bishops and the priests were even then opposed to all manner of wakes, still, a man doesn't often get close to a hundred years. Yes, it seemed quite proper to evade the law just this once, in some legitimate way, and hold a wake. To make a long story short, they got around the law somehow—one doesn't remember now, for 'twasn't important then,—and Paddy Owen had a wake. To speak more correctly, there were two wakes. That is to say, Paddy died in the morning, and that same night there was held what one might call the eve of the wake proper. Liturgically speaking, therefore, the funeral was a double of the first class, second class funerals having only one wake. The first wake was a rather private mourning, to which only relatives, friends, and near neighbors came. The second assumed a more general character, and may admit of brief description before the scene and the setting pass beyond the regions of memory.

One wishes there were some sort of Literary Holy Office to order burned some two dozen or so books on Irish life and character. One would dance with blessed glee around the funeral pyre. And one may add that a few books one remembers by Catholic writers would serve the only good turn they can ever serve if they were added to the flames. In some of these books the Irish wake has been travestied into a drunken orgy that would disgrace a pagan, not to speak of a Christian people at all. How one scolds!

At the principal wake the men sat in the large

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kitchen on improvised seats; the women occupied one of the inner rooms. The corpse, clothed in a shroud that looked like the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, was laid out in a room beyond that occupied by the women. Pipes and tobacco were passed around, and the men smoked in leisurely fashion and conversed in quiet tones. Toward midnight the women drank tea and the men drank a measure of whiskey,—that is, those who wished it. As each woman took her cup of tea, and as each man took his glass of whiskey, they ejaculated, "God rest him!" or "God have mercy on his sowl!" Later on Mrs. Conway led the Rosary for the women, and Tade Clancy led it for the men. Mrs. Conway was reasonably brief with her prayers, and the women were soon free to chat again. Tade Clancy went very leisurely and said every "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" with great unction. Then he had fifteen special intentions to add and several prayers of his own one could never find in the prayer-book. At last they were ended.

"By gor, Tade, you're longer than if 'twas the Mass you wor sayin'," Jim Shanahan remarked.

"Jim, prayer never hurts anny man, and 'tis bettther to be prayin' than sinnin'," came Tade's answer.

"So 'tis, Tade; but a man's knees aren't iron."

"Sure, Jim, the Rosary won't ever wear a man's knees away."

"Yerra, 'tisn't the Rosary I mind at all, Tade. 'Tis the thrimmin's you put on. If you'd say

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the Rosary and sthop, 'twould be well and good. But you have your own prayers, an' they're as long as Jackeen Hogan's song that has thirty-seven verses."

"'Tis for the dead, boys. Don't ye complain. Thim that's gone will thank ye for it."

Then Tade, in weird, far-off tones, told a ghost story, and every ear listened and every imagination quickened as he placed the setting and the time, and set forth every circumstance as if it were of vital importance to remember and narrate. Micky the Fenian told one right after; John Conway followed; and so on like a company of competing troubadours. There was no incredulity in the minds of the listeners, no want of certitude in those who narrated.

Already in those days the practice of keening was fast passing out. The keen itself goes far back into Irish history, and of course comes from the East. Paddy Owen was good and respected and belonged to the bygone days. It was fitting his wake should be honored by the keen. Three old women, who did not practise keening as a profession, but remembered or learned the art from those who did, stood over the corpse and began a sort of half-singing, half-moaning dirge, in which the general goodness of the dead man was lauded and his special and particular virtues repeatedly mentioned. Their bodies swayed back and forth rhythmically as they wailed out the phrases. There was no set form of words, no attempt at continuity of thought, no effort at

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composition. Indeed, one would find it difficult to catch the words, though the general meaning was unmistakable. There was no special attention given to the keening women. Those attending the wake chatted and smoked just the same as if no dirge were sent up for the departed Paddy Owen. If you cared to listen, you could do so; if you had a mind to go nearer for the purpose of catching the words, you were equally free. Although the keen was even then passing out, people took the present instance as a matter of course.

No doubt to many in this modern life the wake and the keen and the smoking and the story-telling will seem ludicrous enough. Every people, however, has peculiar customs that rise out of the remote past. And it is a sure sign of shallowness to laugh at modes and conditions of life that differ widely from those to which one is accustomed.

Paddy Owen had a great funeral the following day. There was Mass at the house in the morning, which the specially invited attended; the priest took breakfast, and those who were very specially invited took breakfast with him. About three o'clock in the afternoon the hearse, drawn by two black-draped horses, came up from Athery and waited out on the road at the end of the boreen. The body was placed in the yellow coffin with brass handles. There was some crying as a matter of course; for it would not be a funeral without that. The body was borne through the

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door that must never open or shut to it again. Four men placed the coffin on their shoulders and began the procession out to the road. After some time four others relieved them. It is a sign of signal honor for the men to carry the coffin on their shoulders to the graveyard.

But Knockfallen graveyard was a long eight Irish miles away, and the sun was already far in the west; so the coffin was placed in the hearse and the great last march began. First there were two priests in a side car, each with a large band of white linen around his hat, and another band over the left shoulder after the manner of a deacon's stole. The hearse followed, then the immediate mourners; the near relatives and the more distant; neighbors and friends; people who knew the family, people who knew relatives of the family; people in the city with whom the family did business, and on, and on, and on, till a number of men on horseback brought up the rear.

It was a long journey, and though they went as fast as funeral proprieties would permit, the shadows were gathering when they reached the place of burial. The same four men who first took the coffin on their shoulders when the body was borne from the house took it again now, and, preceded by the priests who said the prayers of the ritual, circled the entire graveyard. It is difficult to discover the origin of this custom, though one may surmise it is done as a mark of honor to the dead. The body was placed in the



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grave, the earth was heaved in upon the coffin, and one of the priests said five "Our Fathers" and five "Hail Marys" for the departed soul. The people scattered till at last only Tade Clancy and John Conway remained with the men who were shovelling in the dark earth.

"Tade, he lived a long life. 'Twon't be so long with us," said John Conway.

"'Twon't, John,—indeed 'twon't. Long or short, it don't make so much difference, anyway. 'Tis all in the way a man lives."

"'Tis, Tade,—indeed 'tis. But Paddy Owen was a good boy, although thim that know say his mother had high notions."

"Faith so she had, but she was a good woman for all that, an' raised a fine family. An' Paddy Owen was good as a boy, an' good as a man, an' was good always."

"He was, Tade, so he was,—a good boy an' a good man. An' now he's dead an' gone. God rest him, Paddy Owen!"



## WICKED DANAWEE.

**I**F you walk the "cross cut" from the north side of the parish to Knockfeen chapel, midway on your journey you will see to your right the ruins of some forty-five or fifty houses. Only bare walls, many of which are fallen, point to where men lived in the misty past. There is now no family living anywhere near, as the land round about is owned by a rich Protestant from the North of Ireland. He has a care-taker who looks after the cows, sheep, and horses, that wander as they will about the deserted acres. If you stray in among the ruins of a summer day, when the sun is warm and the air still, you will catch the spirit of the place. For any man with a fancy who stands amid ruins, with the silence of death all around, must lose himself in the mazes of the past to follow the winding pathway of his dreams.

Here is a house, with one gable still standing, in which a window looked to the west. The other three walls are in part fallen; and between the fallen stones, nettles and thistles grow tall and strong. As you look through the space where the door once was, you notice a cairn on a rise of

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ground a short distance away. A solitary cow wanders in, looks at you, then at the crumbling walls, exhales a great, relieving breath, whisks her tail, and walks away to where the grass is rich and green. A bumblebee buzzes by, hovers for a little over the thistles and nettles, rises and vanishes through the vacant window. Down among the stones, the frog and lizard are in the damp places; while above you a lone crow is perched on the top of the gable, turning around suspiciously; for experience has taught the crow to be cautious.

Outside runs what was once a village street, called the "King's Journey"; for tradition holds that one of the Irish kings went by there once upon a time, on his way to the more southerly portion of his province. There is a stone at the end of the street called the "King's Chair," where the king rested for want of a better seat. To tell the truth, the stone bears no special resemblance to a chair; but 'tis called the "King's Chair" anyhow, so that ends it. A short distance from this chair a flagstone is buried deep in the earth, with only its rain-stained upper surface showing. In this stone there are two holes, somewhat resembling two saucers. It is called the "Monk's Kneeling Place." A monk from Mungret once made a pilgrimage to the village, and spent the night kneeling on the stone praying for the villagers. Where he knelt is marked forever on the flat surface.

The street is grass-grown as far back as the

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memory of present-day people goes; but ruined houses are lined up at either side of it, to prove that men walked over a gravelled surface once upon a time. A short distance outside the ruins, you can trace the foundations of what was a rectangular building; and at the south end, three feet of wall still stand. Out from this wall, but attached to it, is a sort of stone bracket. On the rectangular foundations which you trace beneath the tall grass, was erected the village chapel, and the stone bracket is all that remains of what was once an altar.

But how came the ruins? And the people, what became of them? That is "a very strange story entirely"; and Grandma Hogan, who lives by herself in a bit of a house near the Athery road, will have to tell us. She is gathering nettles for her young turkeys in one of the ruins, and she will be glad to rest a bit and give us the narrative.

She is a small woman, wearing a white cap, neatly frilled around the border, and caught under her chin with linen strips. A dear little old lady is Grandma Hogan, with her check apron, and her gray shawl gathered snugly over her shoulders and pinned at the breast. She carries on her marriage finger a plain gold wedding ring, which she has worn for fifty odd years, and which she will wear till the day she dies. And, please God, she will wear it to Kilmeedy graveyard, where she will be laid down beside Owen,—him that went from her twenty-five years before. Owen—

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God rest him!—and she lived a happy life together back there among the turf fields of Ballyfin. But that's another story.

"God save you, grandma!"

"Wisha, God save you kindly! An' isn't it fine weather we're havin', praise be to God!"

"Indeed it is, grandma." Then after a pause: "So you're plucking nettles here in this lonesome place?"

"Faix 'tis lonesome enough, sure. But the dead an' thim that's gone don't do any harm to people as don't interfere with thim."

"This must be an old, old place, grandma?"

"Oh, indeed it is! 'Tis hundreds of years ago since people lived here, but they're all dead an' gone now, so they are."

"Doesn't anybody here know anything about them?"

"O faix they do! Paddy the Thatcher, who used to live down near Ballysteen, told us the story many a time whin I was a little girl about that high." Then the dear old lady held her hand two feet above the ground to show how tall she was.

"Maybe you'd have time to tell us, grandma? It must be a strange story entirely."

"I have a little time, thin; an' if you sit down opposite me on that stone over there, I'll tell it to you—lastewise so far as I can remimber."

She sat down herself too, paused for a little, and began:

"The name of the village which used to be here long, long ago was Danawee. Now, what

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Danawee manes I don't know, no more do you, nor any one else. 'Tis a strange name, anyhow. The people o' the village were a wild an' wicked set, so that the devil himself couldn't keep up with thim. They were converted Danes who came out from Limerick an' settled here. But, the story goes, they weren't converted at all, only pretended to be. They were drunk all the time—at laste the min were; an' by all accounts the women weren't much better. An' that's why we say of a man who can't lave the liquor alone, 'He drinks like a Dane.' But they weren't true Christians nor Irish, so 'tis all equal about thim. They had a chapel, but the priest couldn't live in the village with thim, an' the Holy Sacrament wasn't kep' there at all.

"There was a monk in Mungret who was a very holy man, an' he heard about wicked Danawee. So he promised the Lord God on his binded knees that he'd make a pilgrimage out here to convert the sinful people. He came the long journey on foot, an' reached the village at midnight. He spint the rest o' the night kneelin' on the stone over there, prayin' for the conversion o' the people. In the mornin' whin they woke up an' opened their eyes they saw the man o' God kneelin' on the stone, with his cowl over his head an' his face raised to heaven. A big crowd gathered round him in a little while, an' the leader o' thim said:

"'What are you doin' here?'

"'Prayin' for ye, that the thunderbolts o' God may not strike ye.' [ 145 ]



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“‘We don’t care for you nor for God’s thunder aither.’

“‘Take back those wicked words, you wicked man, or God’s finger will fall heavy here,’ said the monk.

“‘To show you how little we fear your threats, you fool monk from Mungret, we’ll take you down the street by a halter.’

“‘An’ thin the crowd howled like demons, an’ got a rope an’ put it around the neck o’ the man that prayed for thim all night on the hard flag. Thin they led him out the village street, an’ each one picked up a big stone as they wint; an’ whin they reached the top o’ the hill over there, they piled the stones together, and that cairn above there is the very same heap they made. Thin they placed the poor monk on top o’ the cairn, and wint around it; an’ as they passed one by one in front o’ him, they struck him on the face with the palm o’ their hands. Thin they led him down an’ took off the halter, an’ the leader said:

“‘Go back now, you fool monk o’ Mungret, an’ always remimber Danawee!’

“‘Yes, I’ll remimber,’ says the monk; ‘an’ God will remimber, an’ all Ireland will remimber Danawee for a thousand years an’ tin. An’ the grass will grow on yer street, an’ the crow an’ the bat will fly through yer windows, an’ the frog an’ the lizard will lie in the damp of yer vacant hearths, an’ the wild ivy will cling to yer fallin’ walls, an’ the place where I knelt will be marked for the mimory of yer wickedness, an’ the cairn



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o' stones will spake of yer sin; for the finger o' God will fall heavy here!' An' he shook the dust of his sandals upon thim, an' wint his way.

"The next night, whin all Ireland was asleep, the heavens grew dark over Danawee. Thin the thunder rumbled an' the lightnin' flashed as if hell itself was open. The rain fell, like if you were lettin' it down through a sieve; an' the wind came from Kerry Head an' roared as loud as the thunder. The earth thrimbled, an' the houses began to fall, an' the roofs were blown away. An' the people who tried to run down the street were struck by the lightnin', an' the people who stayed within the houses were buried under the fallin' walls. An' many cried out:

"Come back to us, monk o' Mungret, an' lift off the curse o' the Lord!"

"But only the ragin' wind an' thunder answered thim; for the monk o' Mungret was gone away. An' they were all killed that night, while the rest of Ireland were sleepin' with the moon an' stars above thim. Their bodies were buried under the ground, so that no one ever found thim; an' their fires were put out, an' were never lighted; an' the walls fell, an' were never again built. The grass grows on the street as you see, an' the frog an' the lizard are in the damp below the stones; an' the bat an' the crow fly through the windows, an' the cairn of stones is still standin' over there on the hill. Min came an' saw an' blessed thimselves, but no man ever after lived at Danawee."

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The long shadows are on the fields as grandma picks up her basket of nettles and takes her way home to the west. The lone crow on the gable wings itself eastward, where the forest trees join their arms and make a perpetual gloom. The voice of the gentle old lady still lingers long after she is gone. Perhaps her story is legend or fiction or fact. Is it so important? A race of poets and story-makers weave their dreams out of a meagre happening or a shadowy place. They take us back over time, and make us forget for a little the stress of the present. They fill the hollow places of the day, where fancy may rest when we have grown weary of hearing the endless march of men.

Danawee is very still now. There is no dark sky, no roll of thunder, no flash of lightning, no roaring wind from Kerry Head. God's anger is past, though the ruins of His vengeance still remain.

## JOHN KENNEDY'S RESOLVE.

"H'E'S as good a man as any in the parish, if he'd only lave the drink alone," declared Mrs. Madigan one day to Mrs. Meehan, who kept a small grocery store at the five-cross roads below Ardee. Mrs. Madigan was on her way home from the Tuesday market, and had pulled up her donkey outside the shop. The two women shot at telegraphic speed from topic to topic, till Mrs. Madigan dispatched her tender message about John Kennedy. That stayed the wandering character of their conversation for a little.

"Wisha, 'tis too bad about John, an' a young wife an' four little childer dependin' on him," came Mrs. Meehan's sympathetic rejoinder.

"'Tis so indeed, Mrs. Meehan; an' a lovely girl Mary Nolan was before she met poor John. Not a finer young lady passed through the gates of Knockfeen chapel yard."

"An' what nice childer she has!" added the other woman. "An' she fustherin' an' draggin', tryin' to keep thim nate an' tidy an' he drinkin' all their little manes."

"Wisha, God help the poor woman!" sighed Mrs. Madigan, with feeling.

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When John Kennedy began his apprenticeship at Hartigan's forge, Ardee, for which apprenticeship his father paid a good five pounds, every growing boy in Knockfeen parish envied John his happy lot. For he was taken out of the wind, rain and cold of the farm to learn an honest trade which in time would bring him "piles o' money." John himself was thankful for the good fortune which opened the gates to a successful future. He was a steady, observant boy, had some schooling, was well-mannered, and soon won the good will of everybody.

"That young Kennedy," Tom Hartigan the blacksmith would say, when John was out of hearing, "is a boy with a quiet tongue an' a quick eye. He'll make his mark some day. See if he don't."

Mrs. Hartigan would declare to a caller:

"Johnny Kennedy is the nicest boy we ever had around the house. Of an evenin' whin we want a bucket o' water he just seems to know it, an' before you have time to say 'How do ye do!' there it is on the floor opposite you. Whin the childer are annoyin' me an' I tryin' to get supper, he coaxes thim out to the little lawn back o' the haggard, an' runs around an' plays with thim till they're good an' tired an' ready enough to be quiet."

John's years of apprenticeship over, he became a regular journeyman in the forge at a wage of sixteen shillings a week. He was as honest as he was skilled, and did not need the eye of a master

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to keep him at work. How the iron rang beneath the blows of his hammer! How hot and treacherous, it writhed like a snake; and then, tamed into submission, assumed the shape the workman intended! With what ease he lifted the horse's hoof into his long leather apron! What a power of command when he said, 'Ho there!' to the fidgety animal! To watch him prepare the hoof, and fit the shoe, and send every nail home and make it secure, was an object lesson on the dignity of labor.

Many a man from Knockfeen parish, when his cattle were sold of a fair-day, dropped into the Ardee forge just to bid John Kennedy the time of the day, and to enjoy a sense of triumph in the thought that this giant was from his part of the county. So it was no wonder Tom Hartigan was sad and sorry the day when John Kennedy said he was going to start out in life for himself.

"Maybe 'tis a raise in wages you're wantin', John? If so, say the word," declared Hartigan, when John broke the news.

"'Tisn't a matter o' wages, Mr. Hartigan." (He always said "Mr." when speaking to or of his employer.) "You've given me all I've ever asked for and all I'm worth. But you see I'm twenty-four now, and there's an openin' down at the crossroads below Knockfeen. I'm well known by the people around, and I'd best begin for myself now, before somebody else gets in there."

"Well, if 'tis to be, John, it will. But I'll miss



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you many a day; an' so will Mary, you were so good to the childer. An' I hope God 'ill bless you and keep you, John!"

"Thank you, Mr. Hartigan,—thank you!" answered John, with a full heart.

Some few weeks later John Kennedy opened his forge at the crossroads below Knockfeen. A year later he was able to build a neat house some short distance from the forge, where he lived alone; for his brothers and sisters were in America or married and settled down for themselves. Perhaps this was the beginning of John's trouble; for when the day's work was over, and he was through with his oftentimes cold and ill-prepared supper, the house was lonesome. For all the talk about solitude, a man does not like to be always alone. So John in the still of the evening walked down the quiet road to Athery, whistling the "Blackbird" or maybe "Garryown."

No man becomes a drunkard in an hour. The habit of coaxing, persuading, and minimizing the evil—the "sure-what-harm-in-a-little-drop argument"—has been at the root of much drunkenness in Ireland. As a rule, men get drunk alone only when they are confirmed drunkards. However it may be with other races, this is surely true of the Celt. His drinking is purely social, until he has acquired the liquor mania. And we know that men with a mania are much the same the world over.

When John met the boys down at Athery of an evening, there was a treat first by this one



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and then by that, and so on until the circle was completed. It is only fair to say that there was no drunken man among them when the party broke up, about ten or eleven o'clock. It is only fair to say, too, that John did not go every night; yet he felt lonesome the nights he stayed home. One should not follow with a morbid curiosity the steps that trace the way to a man's downfall. In a short year or so John was what the world calls a drinking man, although he was not a drunkard. He drank in his hours of leisure "with the boys," as they say. It was not one night a week, nor two, but every night except Sunday, when the public houses were closed. Still he was at work in his forge the whole of the long day, and to all appearances had lost none of his strength or skill. Nor did any gossip go abroad about his pleasant evenings down at Athery.

Mary Nolan and John had grown up together from childhood. They were in the same classes at school, received First Communion and Confirmation at the same time; and, when they grew older, went in each other's company to the races of Newcastle, or maybe to a quiet dance at one of the neighbor's houses. To speak the whole truth, John intended to ask Mary to marry him just after he had completed his house. But it "cost him a penny" to build a home and furnish it. So he said to himself: "I'll wait a year, an' when Mary comes into me I'll have more than a house to offer her." So he waited, and met the boys, and was, as they say, a drinking man

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when Mary became his for always in the sunshine of a June morning a year later.

He kept the straight and the safe road for a couple of years after they were married, and the eyes of a man could hardly see a finer couple as the two went together to first Mass of a Sunday morning. John was tall and muscular, and when the dust and smoke of the working week were washed away with the cleansing waters on Saturday evening, when he wore his collar and tie and his well-kept new suit of clothes and his soft hat, you would think he was an attorney from Limerick or a Member of Parliament. Mary Nolan, who walked at his side, was "a lady born," as Mrs. Sheahan put it. She carried herself with an easy grace, was cheerful in conversation, and strikingly gentle in her manners.

The birth of the first baby boy, sad to say, proved the occasion of John's fall from grace. There were neighbors, friends, and relatives at the christening, and the joy of the time was in full accord with the greatness of the event. John proved a splendid host, passing around among his guests, encouraging here, and insisting there that "joy be unrestrained," as one of the poets has it. He drank much himself—more than was good for him by a great deal,—and, after the festivities were over in the early morning, spent the day in bed. The next night he continued the festivities, though there were no visitors or friends to encourage him.

From that night on John Kennedy was a

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drunkard, carrying with him all the vain hopes, maudlin regrets, and weak promises of the slave of alcohol. If you had known this giant in younger years, if you had ever seen his eyes quick with intelligence, his hand strong with manhood's strength, his forehead on which stood out the sweat of honest labor,—if you had seen him then you would not know the wreck of later years. The fire, too, over which he worked was a heap of embers long since grown cold; his hammers, that rang like bells over the air of the quiet country, were thrown about the floor of the forge, silent as death. Upturned plows with new socks only half fitted, wheels with the rust gathered on their bands, pieces of old and new iron, housewives' broken tongs or pot-hangers, were scattered all about in disorder; while the door of the forge lay open, awaiting for footsteps that did not come.

Down at Athery was the wreck of John Kennedy, a common hanger-on,—watching, like a hound for a whistle, to be offered a drink. When the night was far spent and the shop closed, he slouched back to the home where the ghost of the Mary Nolan that used to be, starved to save her little ones. Many a night when he came home she would be up to meet him; but she was silent then, for it is little use to reason with a drunken man. But late in the morning when he got up, his eyes bloodshot, his hands shaking, she would say to him:

“O John, John, for love of the old days, for

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love of the old life, for love of what once was and isn't any more, give it up! God will help you if you try. Think of the little ones, John. You're making them paupers."

And then the great tears would gush out of his eyes and he would sob as if his heart were breaking. In your pity you would have felt inclined to cry with him.

"As God sees me, Mary, I will! I know I'm doing wrong. I'm crushing the pure heart that is in you. I know I'm starving my little children. God helping me, to-day I'll begin!"

Sometimes he went straight to Father Tracey, took the pledge and received such words of counsel and hope as that good priest could give. Maybe he kept his resolve for a day or two, during which he worked; but even in his labor he was struggling with the thirst that kills. Many a time he dropped his tools, ran up to his house and took up the latest born child in his arms. He held it to his hot face as a drowning man holds to a plank; he kissed the little red lips, as if to slake his thirst with their soft, cooling touch. But, for all the pledges, promises, tears, safeguards, and encouragement, he fell back again into the old sin.

. . . . .  
John Kennedy was standing at the far end of James Freeman's public house at Athery one October afternoon just when the four well-kept children of the publican returned from school. Perhaps John thought of his own children at

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home. They might be as well dressed and as rosy-faced as these. His wife was a beautiful woman, and he was a strong, well-knit man in other years. Now his children were paupers, and his wife had grown thin with trouble.

While he was lost in his reflections, the mother of the four children brought some fresh cuts of buttered bread which she placed on a small table near by. Then she went back to the kitchen for a tablespoon with which to measure out some jam to one of the children who did not relish butter. John noticed the buttered bread, and the sight of it quickened his appetite. With the familiarity of a frequent visitor, he went over to the table to take one of the buttered pieces. Just as he was about to help himself the mother re-entered. She walked straight over to where he was, lifted the spoon and rapped the back of his hand with it sharply.

"You filthy loafer! How dare you take such liberties in my house! How dare you take the bread from my children!"

John received the insult like one who deserved it.

"Yes, but you have taken the bread from mine," he said brokenly.

"Get out, you insulting fellow!"

"I deserve it,—a fool deserves anything," John commented meekly.

The publican, who was near the street end of the house, heard the high-pitched voice of his wife. He rushed back and inquired the cause of the trouble.



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"This drunken blacksmith has tried to take the children's lunch, and then insulted me."

"Kennedy, out with you!" the publican shouted, much as if he were addressing a dog.

"Jim Freeman, listen to me!"

"Out with you, I tell you! Do you want me to kick you out?"

John Kennedy straightened up. His eyes blazed like the eyes of old. He was dangerous now.

"Don't do that, Freeman. Hear me first. Then I'll go."

Freeman and his wife listened, for the publican knew the power that still lurked in the giant form of the unfortunate blacksmith.

"Freeman, your wife hit my hand a while ago for taking a piece of bread intended for your children. For eight years you an' she have taken the bread from me, an' I never complained. You call me a loafer, a drunkard, a dog fit to kick. So I am. But, Jim Freeman, an' you mam, listen. John Kennedy will go home now an' never feed your children again. An' this I tell ye by the truth o' God!"

From the public house he went to his forge that afternoon and put everything in shape for the next day's work. He had little to say to his wife, little to his children when he got home. There was no weeping, no promises. Next day he went to work, and next day, and the next. Meantime such prayers as pierce the clouds were being offered for him by those who loved him



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best. On the last Sunday of October he and Mary walked up the quiet road to Knockfeen chapel. They went early, for John wished to go to confession. He was some time in the "box"; and then came the *Ego te absolvo* from Father Tracey, with unction, one may be sure. Mary confessed too, and husband and wife knelt side by side when receiving Holy Communion.

"John," Mary said quietly some days later, "it looks like the old life come back again. Praise be to God, and thanks to His Blessed Mother!"

John held her in his arms and kissed her with tenderness.

"Forgive the eight years, my true wife, and my heart'll be at rest!"

For answer she kissed him again and again. Ever after John Kennedy loved and labored for his own.

## THE SAD SUNDAY.

**I**T was seven years since Maurice O'Connor left Ireland, and, after many wanderings, took a job as a plain cowboy on a Texas ranch. He might have found employment in a city more to the North and more to the East, where he would be nearer to the gray Atlantic, whose waves touched his native Ireland. But that would only awaken the deep longing, would only quicken the strange, slow pain that lies down in the heart when one has the yearning for home. So he moved out West, and then down South, and sought oblivion on wide, unfenced acres, among wandering cattle, under a high sky and a blazing sun.

Maurice O'Connor and Terence O'Donnell—or "Terr," as he was familiarly called—were the two best friends in all Co. Limerick. They hunted hares of a Sunday or fished in the Deel; they went swimming in summer and drove to the races in early autumn; threw "maggie" sticks at the "pathern," and helped each other cutting the hay or drawing home the turf or the seaweed. 'Twas Maurice and Terr, and Terr and Maurice, spring, summer, autumn, and winter. By the

## ROUND ABOUT HOME

same token, each boy had a grown sister—Kathel O'Connor and Alice O'Donnell,—who were great friends, too. They went to Mass together, and to confession the same Saturday, and to the "railing" the same Sunday. They walked to the dance at Curaheen; they dressed alike, were about the same height, and never had a hard word with each other in all their lives.

"Sure, there'll be a double wedding when the time comes at O'Donnells' and O'Connors'," Johnny Mangan said knowingly to the boys one Sunday at the chapel gate before Mass.

"Faix, I hope so," Tade Clancy added; "for they're two as dacent boys and two as fine girls as any in Ireland."

So the talk went around about a double match and a "great time entirely" when next Shrove would come; or, if not the next, then surely the one after. But 'tis a strange world, and you can never tell what may happen from one day to the next. Anyhow, the wedding was not that Shrove nor the Shrove after.

One Sunday, after the last Mass, Maurice and Terr took their guns and sauntered over to the Curaheen bogs to shoot ducks. The rain of the early day had ceased, but the water still clung to the whitethorn hedges and fell with a swish when the wind shook the branches. The damp grass wet the shoes of the hunters, and the "thraneens" made their trousers, from the knees down, look as if they had been pulled out of the river.

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"Wisha, 'Terr," warned Mrs. O'Donnell with solicitude when her boy was starting out, "be careful and don't get your feet wet crossing the fields."

"I'll be careful, mother," 'Terr answered, as he swung his gun on his shoulder.

"Yes, alanna!" the good woman added by way of commendation and affection.

But when the two boys got together, and took long strides across meadows, and jumped over ditches, and went up hills and down hollows, they never thought at all about wind, wet, or weather. It is one of the joys of the young who live in the country to have good health as a matter of course, and to be no more conscious of it than one is of the march of time in pleasant company. So when the boys reached the bog their heads were full of wild ducks, and 'twas small blame to them that they forgot a trifling admonition about damp grass and wet feet.

About three o'clock in the afternoon 'Terr was hiding behind a clump of rushes, waiting for a couple of ducks that were flying low in his direction. Right behind the rushes a bird arose with a whirl of wings. Maurice, who was some short distance farther back, fired. The shot went through the rushes and O'Connor saw his comrade fall over on his face.

"God in heaven!" he cried as he rushed to him. "O 'Terr, for the love o' God, speak! Only say I haven't killed you!" He turned the companion of a lifetime over on his back. "O 'Terr, 'Terr,

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can't you say you're alive? Won't you look at me? Won't you say one word?"

Slowly the fallen man opened his eyes.

"'Tis here, Maurice,—'tis here!" He placed a languid hand on his breast.

Crazed with fright and anguish, O'Connor tore open the waistcoat, and there was the white shirt soaked with blood. The scattered shot had entered breast and stomach.

"O God! O God!" moaned poor Maurice, helpless and distracted.

"Maurice, I'm goin'—I—I—my—breath—I—"

Then O'Connor held up the tossing head between his hands. The breath came easier now.

"Maurice, 'twas no fault of yours!"

"O Terr, for the love o' God, live! For the—"

"I'm—goin'—'tis catchin' at me—here! O my God—I am sorry—for all—my sins! Have—mercy on—me!"

Across the fields ran a crazed man, telling the neighbors to hurry to the bog. And at the bog, below a clump of rushes, a young man was stretched on his back. The red blood of his strong, graceful body was on the white shirt he had put on that morning. His left hand was extended limp on the grass, his right on his breast where the blood was. The rushes, bending toward him, waved gently; the green fields over which he had so often wandered were around him; the sky, save where the white clouds still lingered, was the blue of hope; his face, white and very still, was turned toward the sky.

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Those were long and terrible days for Maurice O'Connor. To see the friend of all his years stretched dead on the field, and then on the bed,—it was a sight that lived with him for long, long years. And, then, there was the mother, who never, in all her anguish, uttered a word of reproach.

"Sure, Maurice asthore, 'tisin't you would hurt a hair on the head of man, woman, or child, let alone Terr, who was like a brother to you."

Then Alice consoled him, though her own heart was breaking and her eyes red from weeping.

"Maurice, 'tis hard, I know; but God knows best. We must all try to bear it as He wishes, for 'tis His will."

The funeral was over; the days grew to weeks, the weeks to months. But Maurice O'Connor lost his hold on the life around him. He was silent, gloomy, and he had terrible dreams. One doctor said this and another that; one prescribed one kind of medicine, another prescribed another kind. A year went by, and people began to fear for the young man's mind.

One Saturday when he was at Knockfeen to confession, Father Tracey walked up and down the chapel yard with him for a short time.

"Maurice, you're not getting better at all,—I can see that."

"No, Father. I'm never goin' to be well again. My heart is broken."

"Whist!" commanded Father Tracey.

"Father, 'tis the truth I'm tellin'!"



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"I told you to whist, poor boy. Listen to me now."

Maurice listened.

"I want you to start off for America just as soon as you get ready; see that great country and its strange ways. Don't mope around here any longer. Get away; live for yourself and for your own; and for her, and for him that is gone. Maybe in two or in five or in six years you'll get settled and be your own self. Then come back and take Alice; she'll be waiting for you."

Father Tracey smiled in his quiet way. Maurice promised and obeyed.

Pleasure did not help him to forget; for he was too well schooled in his Faith to taste of the joys which, they tell us, bring a mist over memory. But hard work on the ranch—rounding up the cattle all day on the saddle, and branding them, and driving them across wide acres,—all this brought calmer thoughts by day, and a dreamless sleep by night. The men with whom he lived were different from the men he had known,—rough, irreverent, hot-tempered, ready to "drop" a man with a six-shooter on slight provocation. They were not the kindly, bid-you-the-time-o'-the-day men whom he had known and lived with in Ireland. For all that, the Texas cowboy has a kindly heart; and, as Maurice minded his business and never made trouble for anybody, he got on as well as he could wish.

Halsey Tucker was a lad on the ranch he had grown to like. Tucker was a Catholic, who, in

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spite of temptation and bad example and the thousand wiles that lure a man from the strait and narrow way, looked neither to the right nor to the left, but walked the road of faith and honor. Maurice and Tucker became genuine friends. It was not the old friendship which had bound him to the dead Terr O'Donnell. A fatherly interest in the lad, who grew as good and clean and true as a flower in the desert, was the feeling that drew Maurice to him. Many a Sunday they both rode over the prairies to a little church, where the priest said Mass every month. Then before Mass they had a "round up," which was young Tucker's word for confession; and afterward received Holy Communion.

And now Maurice was going home. The old mad pain and the wild dreams were all gone, and only tender memories filled up the hollows of his heart. He was at the little station some twenty miles from the ranch, waiting for the night train from San Antonio on its way to St. Louis. Young Tucker was with him to see him off.

"I'm sorry to see you leavin'," said the young Texan, aiming with his whip at a cinder on the platform.

"Well, Tuck, I'm sorry too. I'm leaving you, for one thing, and that's hard."

"Ha'd! I should say *so*! Heah am I all 'lone now, with no one to caah for me in this heah ranch. I tell you 'taint so easy to be on the squaah all the time!"

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"But you will,—won't you, 'Tuck?"

"I reckon *so*. I'll be bettah all my life for knowin' you. I ain't goin' to stay heah. I'm goin' back to Houston."

"Good, 'Tuck! You'll be better off there. And you'll go to church?"

"I should say *so*!"

"And to round up?"

"Well, I reckon I will!"

Then the train puffed over the prairie toward the station.

"Good-bye, Tuck, and God keep you!"

Maurice held the lad in his arms for a moment. Out of the Southern eyes, as blue as the Southern skies, the tears came and flowed softly down the young face.

"I'll think of you, 'Tuck. Do write!"

"I'll" (then a great sob),—"I'll suah be lonesome for you."

"I'll write to you often, 'Tuck. Good-bye,—good-bye!"

Maurice O'Connor looked through the window of the Pullman sleeper, watching the vanishing fields and the Negro shanties, and here and there an odd ranch house. Halsey Tucker was still standing at the station, with folded arms, watching the smoke fade on the wake of the now unseen train.

"He was suah one good man; and now he's goin' back to that green Ireland of his. Reckon I'll start for Houston to-morrow."

The rest is soon told. Maurice and Alice

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O'Donnell were married the following Shrove, and his sister Kathel lived with her mother. Then in a few years the mother died, and Maurice and Alice insisted that Kathel come to them. The children always called her "Auntie," and hung around her morning, noon and night. She loved them all, but little Terr was her favorite.

"I suppose you won't ever marry, Kathel?" Father Tracey asked her one day, with the freedom which his position justified.

"No, Father: I'll remain single."

"And you don't feel drawn to the convent?"

She shook her head.

"Maybe you're wise, child! Maybe 'tis God's will in your regard. He leads us in wondrous ways, and in the end to heaven. 'In My Father's house there are many mansions.'"

## HOW THE CURSE WAS LIFTED.

THE Creegans were the richest people in our parish,—as rich beyond all the other families as the highest peak of the Galties is above the lesser peaks that cluster at its base. They were simple people for all that, without any affectations. The boys never wore brown leather leggings nor topcoats; they never rode after the hunt, nor blew the dust into your eyes speeding by on sidecars. The girls—three of them—never went to France for the winter, nor to Kilkee for the summer. They gave no balls or parties when they became of age. In fact, the Creegans were very much like the rest of the parish, except the Hartigans, who were “out-and-out grandees entirely.”

For all their goodness and kindness and simple ways, the Creegans never seemed to have luck. One of the boys was lame; John, the second son, had spinal trouble, so that he could never stand up straight like a healthy man; Margaret was bedridden; and Catherine, the second sister, was a wee bit of a creature, that stopped growing when she was ten years of age. She and Mrs. Walsh of Grageen were the two saints of the

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parish, who made the Stations and always said "two rounds of the Beads" every Sunday before first Mass.

Well, the reason the Creegans never had luck was due to the "blood money" which was in the family. In the days of the Fenians, a great-great-grandfather of the present head of the house betrayed a couple of the "boys" who were hiding from the "peelers," for which he received a good sum of money by way of reward. Thereafter, "blood money" was in the family. Usually people thus tainted are left to themselves. The neighbors do not visit them, nor ever borrow a spade or a pitchfork of them; nor do they lean over the half-door and say, "God bless all here!" when passing by the house in the morning.

But it was different with the Creegans. They were honest people, who would not take a sloe out of a bush that did not belong to them—except the man that took the money long ago, and they could not help that, after all. So everybody had a kindly feeling toward the Creegans; and the boys dropped in of an evening sometimes, and the neighbors gave them a "lift" when making the turf or threshing the oats. And everybody kept hoping that the curse would soon be lifted, and that the next generation would not have to suffer for the wrongdoing of a long-dead ancestor.

There was good foundation for the hope too; for the third son, Maurice, the only healthy one, was in his second year at Maynooth and would soon be "priested." There was no doubt at all



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but that a priest in the family would "lift the curse."

When he came home every summer, Maurice went to early Mass and received Holy Communion. He wore a black suit, and, except for the lack of the tall hat, you would take him for a priest anywhere. He was a thin man, with hands like a lady's and a face as smooth as a boy's. He was always accompanied to the chapel by two of his sisters, who clung to him tenderly because they loved him with a real love, and because he would soon be a priest of God and an honor to the family.

The boys of the parish were out at the chapel gate one Sunday in summer, waiting for the "last" bell to ring. By the same token, many a time Father Tracey ordered them in to say a few extra prayers before Mass. They went in for a Sunday or two; then there was a notice on the chapel gate about an auction or a meeting, or sports up at Ballingarry. Mick Sheahan stopped to read it, and the others gathered around. When they were done reading, they began talking, and so they fell again into the old rut.

"I see Mr. Creegan is back for his vacation," commented Jack Hogan.

"So he is. He spoke to me yesterday as I was coming hether from Madigans' forge," Jim Donnelly agreed, taking a "shock o' the pipe" in the few minutes that remained.

"He's a lovely man and as gintle as a lady."

"He is that, Johnny Mangan; an' I hope God

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will give him good health to finish, for he does be very frail-lookin'."

It was Mick Sheahan who spoke, leaning against the gate pier.

In the chapel Maurice and his sisters were kneeling at the railing. Catherine was praying before Our Lady's altar, asking the Blessed Mother to keep Maurice well through the long, difficult, searching years of the Maynooth course. No doubt, Mary, the youngest daughter, was making a like petition from where she knelt before the main altar.

During the weekdays Maurice was accustomed to go down among the boys in the hayfields or at banking the potato drills or at cutting the oats. Brought up in the fields and among the men of the fields, he never sought other scenery or other society. When Dick Fitz, forgetting himself, cursed old "Bill," the gray horse, because "Bill" did not "whoa" when ordered, Maurice seemed only to notice Dick's embarrassment. He liked to hear Tade Clancy tell stories, especially when Jim Donnelly was present to contradict. He would follow for hours the mowers, their bodies swaying right and left, leaving great rows of hay in their wake.

Sometimes he took three or four schoolboys back to the Deel for a day's fishing; and while they talked among themselves and waited anxiously for a bite, he watched the gliding waters and began to dream. He lived over again the day when for the first time he took the train at the little

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station and went away to Dublin. The years were long and uneventful since then. College life and the changeless round of classes, and a discipline that held him close within walls, had little charm for him. He went through it as one goes through a disagreeable journey to a desired place. It was prosy and monotonous, and—well, he was glad college was over; and he would be glad, too, when he could say “Good-bye!” to the theological seminary at Maynooth. He liked the free air and the soft grass and the murmuring streams, and the care-free life of Knockfeen parish. It was his home, and he never found that college or seminary life could fill up the void when he was away from the places and people he knew and loved.

Maurice Creegan was in his last year of theology; and at the end of the school year he would be “priested,” as the people put it. After that he might be lent out for a couple of years to one of the English dioceses where priests are scarce. The wait till a young priest becomes a parish priest is long, very long, in Ireland. But the Creegans wanted to see Maurice ordained, and gave no thought at all to promotion. Just to see him a priest, so he would bless them and remove the curse, was the desire of their hearts.

About mid-May of that last year—with ordination a little more than a month away—a boy went down across the fields from Knockfeen station, bearing a blue envelope in his hand. He was the station-master’s son, carrying a telegram

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to the Creegans. A telegram to the country districts in Ireland means, as a rule, bad news of some kind. Business among the people is not of so hurried or complex a character as to be transacted over the wires. When, once in a year or so, the station-master's son bore a message to a family, one wondered who was dying or dead. And when Catherine Creegan saw the boy coming across the field to the front of the house, she sat back in a chair from sheer weakness and exclaimed:

"My God, something is wrong with Maurice!"

The boy handed her the envelope, and, lifting his cap respectfully, walked away quickly, as he had been instructed to do by his father, who well knew people do not desire witnesses during the first moments of a crushing sorrow. Catherine broke open the seal and read:

MAURICE CREEGAN, ESQ.,  
Cronagh, Knockfeen,  
Co. Limerick.

Your son had hemorrhage this morning. Condition critical but not hopeless. Come.

The message was sent by the president of the seminary.

Strange to say, the only comment that passed the girl's lips was:

"I felt it,— I felt it was coming always. We are not worthy. We must suffer yet."

Maurice died at two o'clock that afternoon, while the father was on his way to Dublin. When he reached Maynooth, it was to find the hope of the family white and very still in one of the infirmary

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rooms. Next day the coffin was taken out of the van at Knockfeen station, and one of the largest gatherings of people ever seen there met the remains. They came in such great numbers to show their sympathy that the boy did not live to be "priested," so that the curse might be lifted.

After the funeral, they chatted here and there among themselves by the fireside or when out working in the gardens.

One said:

"By gor, 'tis hard, after all, the poor boy wasn't 'priested,' and that he's now lyin' in the churchyard."

"'Tis,—indeed 'tis. Sure everyone was hopin' an' prayin' he'd live an' finish, and so lift the curse that hangs over thim."

Father Tracey heard of this gossip, and spoke about it from the altar.

"You talk about a priest being ordained as the only way of lifting a curse from a family, if curse there be. But God can work His will in many ways; for His arm is not shortened, and He can do what He wishes in His own blessed time. Therefore, let us stop talking and gossiping among ourselves about works that are divine, and therefore far beyond us. The Lord gave, the Lord took away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

They all knew what was meant, and kept silent ever after.

There is a new generation of Creegans now. The youngest boy, who used to be afflicted with strange attacks of melancholy, got well gradually



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and then married a girl from Adare. Their five children are strong and hearty-looking, and fill the house with the music of their laughter. Margaret, the invalid sister, and Catherine who never grew to full womanhood, are living with their brother, and find their joy with the children. John, who had spinal trouble, died in Limerick hospital; and the lame boy has some position with the Government in Dublin. The father and mother are both "gone home."

"The Creegans were always good, dacent people," said Tade Clancy, "only for that ould lad o' thim that took the money long ago."

"They were,—indeed, they were," added John Conway. "I was sorry whin the boy died that time, an' he so near bein' 'priested.' But 'twas God's will, an' the curse is lifted anyway, now."

"Yes," added Tade; "an' it was as Father Tracey said at the chapel during Mass, 'God can work as He will.' Maybe 'twas to reward thim for their resignation and patience, and to compinsate them for their sorrow, that He lifted the cursè whin Maurice—peace to him!—wint away."



## THE TRUE LOVE OF MAGGIE MAY.

**S**HE was the lone sister of six brothers, but for all that Maggie May Conway was not a spoiled girl. To be sure, she was her father's "pet" and her mother's "treasure" and the idol of those six boys. But, in spite of the praising and petting and idolizing, Maggie May was the gentlest girl in Co. Limerick. Her father, Dr. John Conway, was the physician of Knockfeen village, with a practice that took him into the country for miles around. He was a good family doctor, disposed to be cheerful and sympathetic with his patients. He was especially kind to the poor, following out the maxim which Father Tracey had given him years before: "What a man gives to the poor will come back double."

Maggie May was nearly twenty-one, "tall and well-proportioned," as the people about put it. Her rich growth of hair was gold colored, and, as one of the Celtic bards said of a lady of his time, "every strand was a ray borrowed from the sun." Her features were long, her eyes mild and full of expression. Indeed, if you saw her in the still of a summer morning, as she walked down the village to Mass, you would say she was the most beautiful girl you ever laid your eyes on.

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Hers was not merely a physical beauty, however, which will spoil a girl who has not the good sense to keep her feet on the ground. Maggie May had a ripe mind. She had been going to school to the nuns ever since she was able to walk; and then she went to Newtownbarry, Co. Wexford, for an advanced course in the convent there. She could talk with her father about the Celtic movement in literature, and often had the better of the argument, though she rarely pressed her victory.

When Dan Donovan started a draper's shop at Knockfeen and began life for himself, there were many who shook their heads at the "foolish venture." First of all, he had left a good position in Dublin,—that is, good as positions go in Ireland. In the second place, he was a stranger to Knockfeen, having been born at the east side of the county. But a travelling man told him a shop was needed there; and Dan went, secured a place, and began business. You may be sure the days came and went slowly enough at first; for the people were not anxious to change from old to new ways. No doubt he was a good young man, who made fine promises; but the new broom always sweeps well. And many a night Dan went to bed in the little room above his shop with a tired and sorry heart, and many a morning he woke with no new hope for the new day.

Often and often Maggie May went by the shop on little business trips to Athery. Five or six

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times she saw Dan standing solitary as a signpost at his door. He looked well, too, with his thoughtful face, and with a stature as tall and as brave as the son of the Fenian mother described in the song. Maggie May inquired about the stranger, heard his story, and pitied.

"Poor young man, all alone in the village, and not one of us lifting a hand to help him! 'Tis shameful, so it is!"

So next day she went to the shop, bought presents for her father and the boys—handkerchiefs, neckties, collars, and what not—till they thought the girl was taking leave of her senses entirely. Then she had a good word to say to this one and that about the new shop and the fine young man who was behind the counter. The people went, reluctantly at first, out of friendship for Maggie May; more willingly later on, because the shop was well supplied with the latest and best, and because the handsome young man was kind and obliging.

One day when Maggie May was coming back from her walk she stepped in to buy a new pair of kid gloves for her mother. Now, her mother did not need gloves at all, but the young lady felt she had a duty to perform to the lonely draper.

"What size did you say, Miss Conway?"

"O yes, the size! I haven't thought of that. Now, let me see!" She frowned, trying to remember. "How stupid I am not to know the size of my own mother's gloves!" she said, with confusion.

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Donovan came to the rescue with a timely suggestion.

"Now, Miss Conway, unless 'tis very urgent, you could call in later on, and meantime you could find out the size."

"Yes, that will be best, Mr. Donovan."

She was about to leave, when Donovan made a little speech which he had been intending to make for some time.

"Miss Conway, before you go I want to thank you as much as ever I can for the great kindness you have shown me in coming yourself and getting the people to come to my little shop. You see, I am just starting; I haven't much yet, but I hope to get on better as the months go by. Just now you have been a very good friend when I need friends most, and I hope—I hope—God will bless you for it."

"Now, Mr. Donovan, I knew you had a good shop, so I came here myself, and got my friends to come too. That's all. You have held them all by courteous attention."

The months went by, and Dan Donovan prospered even as he deserved. Always he remembered the pure young face of Maggie May that first brightened his shop and brought luck ever after, and always he was strangely glad at the thought. Many times they met and chatted, and their acquaintanceship quickened into friendship. What wonder is it that in these two young hearts friendship ripened into love? And that was what caused all the trouble.

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Dr. John Conway was a good man,—let no one doubt that. But many a good man has a weakness, and Conway had his. He was an Irishman with an ambition for an Anglo-Celtic alliance. To put it concretely, he wished his Maggie May to marry a Major Sterwood, of the “Queen’s Own.” He had met the Major several times in Limerick at the home of Dr. Breenly, who was a lifetime friend of his. This Major Sterwood was a relative of Dr. Breenly, and of course crossed the Channel two or three times a year to visit him and his family. On two or three occasions Dr. Conway took Maggie May with him to visit at the Breenlys’, where she met the Major; and, naturally, there was “big talk and ado” about a future match. To make a long story short, the Breenlys were the means of opening negotiations for a marriage alliance between the Celtic house of John Conway, M. D., and the Anglo-Norman house of Major Sterwood, of the “Queen’s Own.”

The Major was not an Irishman, nor was he a Catholic. However, Sterwood was a good enough name, and he a good enough man for any woman, thought John Conway. In addition to his good name, he stood high in army circles. To be sure, he was a member of the Church of England; but, as they were to be married across the Channel, a dispensation could be easily secured, and Maggie May would be as happy as the day is long. That was how John Conway reasoned; and, to tell the truth, his wife shared his views. Not that her



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heart was so set on the match; but a chance like that does not come every new moon.

Early in December came the solemn night when Maggie May was to be informed by her father of her coming marriage to Major Sterwood. The fire in the grate cast a cheerful glow on the carpet of the sitting-room, and danced fitfully on the glass hangings of the chandelier. The clock on the mantelpiece beat back and forth the march of the moments, while the old grey-and-white cat purred contentedly in a plush-covered chair. By accident or by design—it is not so important either way,—both parents were alone with their daughter that winter evening. The father was evidently nervous, as most honest men are when they have something to propose which needs diplomacy to hide its unpleasant features.

“Daughter,” said the Doctor, clearing his throat—he always said “daughter” on solemn occasions,—“we have something very important to tell you to-night. You are now nearing twenty-one years complete, coming June tenth. You have always been a good, dutiful daughter, the light and comfort of your mother and myself. Of course we should like to keep you always, to brighten the house, especially when we are grown old; for we shall have to depend upon somebody else then to take care of us. But that would not be fair to you. So, after thinking it over ourselves, and talking it over with our closest friends, we have decided to arrange a match between you



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and Major Sterwood, the cousin of the Breenlys. In fact, we have already broached the matter; and the Major—fine gentleman that he is—has shown himself well disposed and well pleased. I feel the time has come to let you know our wishes, and what we have done in your behalf.”

The Doctor felt he had said just what he intended, and had said it well. There was a profound silence. And a profound silence may be the highest tribute of appreciation or the most crushing form of disapproval.

“And now, daughter, we are waiting for a word from you,” ventured the Doctor, when the long pause had grown painful.

“And what should I say, father?” she asked, her eyes watching the blaze that rose and fell behind the grate.

“‘Say’! Why, that’s a strange way to put it, daughter. Surely, you can say how thankful you are, and how happy and how fortunate.”

There was a note of ill-humor in the Doctor’s voice.

“Father, I can not be thankful for that which I do not consider a gift; I can not be happy for what I know would bring me only misery all my years; and I can not call myself fortunate for that which would bring me only misfortune.”

“That is unusual language to your father and mother, my girl. You don’t know how long and how hard we have worked to bring this match about.”

“Father, I wish you hadn’t,—I wish you had

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left that Englishman to go his own ways." Maggie May's eyes glistened with the tears that were ready to break their barriers.

"Daughter," said Dr. Conway, in a tone that always meant the last word to his children, "we have set our hearts on this match."

"And, father," answered the girl, "I have set my heart against this match." The glistening tears were all dried up in the blaze of her eyes.

"My God, is she mad,—is the girl mad to use such language? Am I doting or do I hear the truth?"

"Father, listen one moment."

"No! Away with you, you impudent hussy! How dare you—be off!"

"John," interposed Mrs. Conway, "let her speak. The child should be heard."

Dr. Conway did not say "Yes" and he did not say "No."

All traces of anger gone, Maggie May began:

"Father, and you—mother, you have always been good to me,—very, very good. You have given me whatever my heart wanted, and more. You have never asked me for anything; though often I wished you would, so that I could show you I had a love for you in return. Now you come at last and ask me to give the heart in me to some one else. I wish I could give it, for your sakes; but I am not free. Let me say it as truly as the heart beats in me, I can never marry this Englishman."

"Go to your room!" exclaimed the Doctor.

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She was gone in an instant, and the door closed behind her.

In her room there was an exquisite little statue of the Immaculate Conception, the crushed serpent beneath the feet, the blue girdle gathering in the white robes. Before it knelt Maggie May, and prayed long and tenderly to the Virgin Mother; while abroad, the vast sky was lighted with the trembling stars.

Dr. Conway and his wife held conference far into the night. The conclusion was inevitable. It is always so in Ireland. Father Tracey was to be brought into consultation; he was to be acquainted with the proposed alliance; he was to advise, and then win over the wilful, foolish heart of Maggie May.

The consultation took place next day; and Father Tracey listened to the long narrative of eulogy for the Major, his position, possibilities, and what not.

"And now, Father Tracey, what do you think?" asked Dr. Conway, when he had finished.

"I don't know what to think. Sometimes if we'd think less and pray more, the paths we plan would be straighter and smoother."

"Well, Father, we have set our hearts on this match, and you must see Maggie May and get her to be reasonable."

"Listen to me, John Conway. We are wise in our ways, and we plot and figure, but God doesn't always figure with us. I know your Maggie May; I have seen her grow from a child

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up. Her heart is white,—just as white as the lily. But the lily is easily crushed till the life dies out of it, and it never grows again. I'll speak to Maggie May, John; but I will not crush the love out of her young heart, if I think the Lord God put it there."

That evening, when Maggie May, in answer to his invitation, entered his little sitting-room, Father Tracey was just finishing his Office.

"Just wait now a minute, child," he said, as he fingered the pages looking for an antiphon. "And now, Maggie May, I have something to say to you," declared the priest, when he had put aside his Breviary. Presently they were discussing the proposed alliance. "Tell me, what is there about this English Major that makes you turn against him?"

"Father, no doubt Major Sterwood is as good as they say he is. I hope so, for it will be all the more to his credit. But how can that concern me? I have never had the least desire to marry an Englishman and leave my own country."

"But perhaps you would grow to like this—this Englishman after a while?"

"No, Father. A girl has one heart to give, and after it is given she should never take it back and give it to another."

"To another?"

"Yes, Father, to another."

"I see,—I see! So somebody else has first claim to Maggie May! Well, *well!*" (Father Tracey was silent for a while.) "And is he one of our own people, child?"

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"Indeed he is, Father, and worth more than a whole army of English officers."

"You don't tell me! And who is he?"

"Mr. Donovan."

"The draper upstreet?"

"Yes, Father."

"Well, I declare!"

The priest looked fixedly at the well-worn carpet of the sitting-room, and was lost in the mazes of his reflections. When he came back to the open, Maggie May was still waiting.

"Child, this Donovan is here only seven or eight months, and he's not rich and has no pretensions. Your father will be in a fine temper when he hears it, and many a day will go by before he consents."

"Father, I will wait."

"I believe you will," said the priest, thoughtfully.

She left presently.

Later on Father Tracey broke the news to Dr. Conway. He was an outraged man, you may be sure, and swore he would see the "hussy" dead before he would give his consent.

"Don't say that, John," cautioned the priest.

"Father, I am speaking simple truth: I'd see her dead before I'd consent to her marriage with that pauper."

"God may take up your threat, John," said the priest, as he went sadly away.

It was with a sense of crushed pride the Doctor broke off negotiations for an alliance with Major



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Sterwood. But you may be sure he was fully determined that if his family could not step up to the Major, it would not step down to Donovan.

Life in the Conway house went on much as before. Maggie May was quieter, the Doctor was a trifle less demonstrative; but beyond that there was no perceptible change.

Shortly after the Christmas holidays, two years later, Maggie May contracted a cold while visiting friends in Cork. In a week after her return she was in the clutches of pneumonia, and the death struggle was on.

The best physicians in Limerick came, examined and prescribed. A renowned specialist was summoned from Dublin, and with him came hope. He examined and prescribed. But Maggie May was sinking fast. Her mother sat by the bedside all the day and far into the watches of the night; her father came often, lingered a moment and went sadly away. There were times when words came incoherently from the sick girl, and there were times when she was strangely calm. In one of those calm moments she whispered to the nurse:

"Father Tracey—I want to see him!"

She had already received the last Sacraments and was prepared for the long journey. It was something else now.

"Father," she whispered when the priest was alone in the room, "I would like to see him,—I would like him to come, so I could marry him as I promised."

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"And you still think of him? And you still love him?" asked the astonished priest.

"Always, always!" she said, through her parched lips, as if she were saying a prayer.

They were married that waning day in late January, with a pale sun breaking through a cloud in the blue above. They vowed their vows till Death should them part, and Death even then was trying to set them asunder. But Death did not conquer, for Love gives life. When Maggie May looked into the eyes of Dan Donovan, she whispered:

"O Dan, Dan, I do not wish to die yet!"

"And you shan't, my own! For God doesn't want you yet, and He won't put our lives asunder so soon."

"May His will be done!" ejaculated Father Tracey.

"Father, bless us both, and your blessing will keep us together," said the young man, kneeling down before the priest and holding the feverish hand of his young wife.

"God bless and keep you together all the years, my children!" said the gentle priest, as he signed them with the Sign of the Cross.

Some of the neighbors said it was Father Tracey's blessing; a Limerick physician said it was a case of "reinforced vitality"; Moll Magee said "it was the sight of Dan Donovan himself—God bless him!—that kept the life in the girl." One can not be sure. Anyhow, Dan and Mrs. Donovan

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were the loveliest couple that ever entered the dear old chapel of Knockfeen two months later, when they got back from their trip to the North of Ireland.

## THE FALLING OF NIGHT.

JOHN HARTIGAN died at the noon of a July day, when the air was still and dry and the sun hot. He left behind him a large family and a widow,—she that used to be Mary Cusack from back near Glen. The women came at three o'clock to lay out the corpse, and soon John was stretched upon the bed, his hands clasped over his breast, with the crucifix between them. His strong face was as white as ivory, his eyes closed, his lips pressed together. Mrs. Hartigan herself was as tearless as a stone; for the heart in her was broken, now that her husband was still and cold. The little children—the younger ones—went about the house, not knowing what had happened, and looking with large, wondering eyes at their dead father.

The evening is coming now. The hills grow fainter, and the line of the horizon melts into the land. Nearby neighbors have caught the silence of the place of death, and the spirit of quiet extends to people more remote. The men in the hayfields, who could not stop work for fear the hay might be spoiled by a rain shower on the morrow, work fast but silently, gathering in the last cocks to finish off the "reek." Mike Donovan lifts a heavy forkful to John Hackett, who stands

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on the rung of the ladder which rests against the "reek." Hackett lifts it to another man farther up, who in turn pitches it to the man on top. Always their conversation is subdued; for the neighbors feel a deep sympathy, as the one taken is a "great loss."

Little Johnny Hogan walks up the "boreen" for the cows, which are waiting near the gate of the high field to be driven home for the milking. The shepherd dog trots before him, unmindful of the birds that rise of a sudden from behind tufts of grass beside the lane. He reaches the gate of the high field, and if you were to stand beside him you could see the houses that lie in the wide valley below. They are whitewashed, and the roofs of many are newly thatched; for the thatcher made his circuit of the townland a few weeks before. In the rear lie "haggards," out of which many drills of early potatoes have been dug. You can see the bare places where the withered stalks are piled together, in sharp contrast to the green of the growing stalks not yet uprooted by the spade. Apple trees bend their scores of arms under the weight of the rapidly ripening fruit. The wheat fields lie in great ridges, which will turn to gold with the August sun. Under the oats the clover catches the night dew and grows apace. Out of many chimneys the smoke rises in graceful columns.

Johnny opens the gate and the cows pass leisurely through, one by one. There is no need for the boy to run beside them, to turn them this



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way or that: they know the way, and are anxious to get to the barn, where their full udders will be relieved of the milk. They form a great, unbroken procession as they follow one behind the other, their bodies swinging from side to side, their heads tossing, their tails, like whips, beating off the flies. One lows long and plaintively, and the echo comes back from a little body of water called Loughdee. Once within the barn, they stand quietly chewing the cud, while the foaming milk flows into the wooden buckets, which, when filled, are emptied into large cans, that in turn are carted to the dairy where the milk is "set" in wide, shallow pans. Usually there is talk and laughter and, here and there, a snatch of a song; but this evening the milkers speak softly out of respect for the dead man that lies in a sombre room lit up by two wax candles in the house of Mrs. Hartigan a couple of fields away.

The men at the hay have almost finished their work. John Hackett is pulling on one of the hay-ropes that extend over the "reek" to keep it safe against the wind squalls that betimes blow across from the Atlantic. While John pulls, the man on top strikes the rope lightly with a hayfork to make it taut down the sides. He holds the prongs toward him, so that if the fork should slip from his hands, no great harm would come to the man below. When the ropes are made secure the men go around the "reek" with wooden rakes, smoothing it down and taking off the loose hay. The work is completed at last.

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"By gor, Jim," Hackett says, lifting a fork and rake over his shoulder, "if it rains now itself, 'twon't be any great harm."

"'Twon't, John,—'twon't; but Bill Ahern hasn't reeked his ten-acre field yet, an' he wants the dry weather a little while."

"Oh, I don't think 'tis goin' to rain anyway!" John added, looking up at the sky with keen eyes.

And, truly, heaven carried no menace on its broad face that evening. Here and there a star began to peep,—the advanced-guard of the great army that very soon would encamp on the wide acres of the sky. The leaves on the maples were faintly stirred with the soft wind of the South. Not a single cloud floated anywhere above the earth, while all around was sweet with the smell of the garnered hay.

"So poor Hartigan is dead, after all!" mused Mike Donovan, as he walked behind the other men, not paying any attention to Hackett's pronouncement about the weather.

"Wisha poor John! An' he didn't last long." It was Tom Sullivan, the man that worked on top of the reek, who spoke.

"Faix he didn't. Sure 'tis only a week ago, ere yesterday, he took sick. I was mowin' a little o' thim rushes," Donovan continued, walking more leisurely along the headland of the potato field, toward his house, "whin John walked by me on the path beside the bog. 'Good-day, John!' says I.—'Good-day!' says he. 'An' God

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bless your work!'—'An' you too, John,' says I. 'An' how are you?'—'I'm not well at all, Mike. I have just been up to Dr. Conway about a pain I've been havin' in my side, an' about a reelin' I gets in my head after I've been workin' for a bit. An' Dr. Conway examined me an' told me to go home an' go to bed at once, an' that he'd be down later on in the day with medicines.' John left me an' went home, an' the first thing I knew was that he was down with a ragin' faver; an' next day he had the priest, an' a couple o' days more he was given over by priest an' doctor, an' to-night he's wakin'."

"Yerra, life is so short anyhow, we're foolish to spind so much of our time pullin' an' draggin', whin in a few years we'll have to lave it all behind us," said John Hackett, as he changed fork and rake from one shoulder to the other.

"That's all very fine talk, John," replied Tom Sullivan; "but a man has to pull an' drag an' make a livin'. Sure, 't isn't the likes of us would go 'round the country with a sack on our backs beggin'. We must live an' work, an' save a little for our childer whin the rainy day comes."

"Sure I know that myself. I'm only sayin' we mustn't think that workin' an' gettin' together a little money is the only thing."

Probably Sullivan would have found some way to take exception to Hackett's final admission even, but they were already before the door of the house, where Mrs. Donovan announced: "Supper is ready!"

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Back on the white road, the rattle of cars, returning from the market of Ardee, comes faintly; a dog barks from the yard of a neighboring house at a passing stranger; a cow, her head above the gate, lows plaintively. The milkers have now finished their work; the milk is set, and the dairy door is closed for the night. The moist dew is on the grass and on the unripe ears of wheat, and on the unraked hay still spread out upon the meadow.

Down at the house of the dead, people speak in whispers as they come and go. From the yard before the house you can see into the room where the body is laid out; for the window is open to admit the cooling air. The two candles on the table, with the crucifix between them, burn with a steady flame for a little, then flicker slowly as they catch the cool breath of the night. Below the crucifix there is a glass of holy water, in which is placed a sprig of fir, with which those who come sprinkle the corpse. The face of the dead Hartigan is as white as the white sheets that cover the bed. How ghostly, how unlike the sights to which one is accustomed,—the face of the dead, under the flickering light of candles, as seen through the window from the yard!

In the still night, faintly outlined forms are seen coming from different directions, not talking loudly nor laughing, nor whistling the turn of a reel, nor lilting a stave of a song. For Hartigan was a young man taken away shortly after the midday of life, with promise of a calm, peaceful

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evening unfulfilled. His children are young and helpless, and his wife has a hard life ahead of her.

A group of men are standing, their elbows resting on the stone "ditch" some short distance from Hartigan's house. The night is rather early yet; the air is fresh, and a quiet smoke in the open is inviting. Tade Clancy is among the number, and already he is peopling the fields with spirits.

"Wisha, boys, do ye remimber ould Crockett that used to keep the hounds?"

"We do so."

"Ye do of course, seein' he's dead only fifteen years. But did ye ever hear what happened at his funeral?"

Most of them had not heard, or said so at least; for they liked Tade's stories.

"Well, I'll tell it to ye so." And Tade began: "Now, ould Crockett was the divil after the the hounds, an' the divil entirely after the rints. One year whin the crops were poor an' the people sufferin', they asked him to take half for that year, an' wait till the times got better. But not a bit of him would do it. 'Pay,' says he, 'or get out.' His tinnents, as ye know, were all in the parish of Ballyadam, an' the parish priest was a young man—Father Halpin, since dead, God rest him!—an' a great Irishman. An' whin he heard what Crockett said to his tinnents he spoke from the altar, an' says he: 'Do ye stop him from huntin' in yer lands, because Crockett an' every other landlord is huntin' by the sufferance of the people.' An' Crockett heard it, an' wint to see



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the priest. 'Is what I hear true?' says he.—''Tis, an' double true,' says Father Halpin.—'Thin take that!' says he, hittin' the priest across the face with his whip, the black scoundrel! Father Halpin was a tall, strong man who could have pitched Crockett over the ditch with his one hand. But he didn't lay a finger on him, only said, solemn-like, just before he wint back into the house: 'The dogs you hunt with will want to get you before long.' That was all the word he spoke, an' wint through the door.

"About a year after Crockett took sick with pneumony, and died in a week. An' after four days of mournin' they decided to bury him with a grand funeral. One of the honors was to have his hounds go behind the hearse. So, by gor, on the mornin' of the funeral two of the servant boys led the dogs down the road a bit, to wait till the funeral got that way, so that whin it came by they'd fall in with the procession behind the hearse. By an' by the funeral came along, an' just as soon as the hearse got near the dogs, they let up a howlin' like all the divils in hell were let loose among thim. They tore at the horses, barked around the hearse as if they were clane mad every dog o' thim. An' the servant boys an' the coachmin who got off the carriages, bate thim back with their whips, till the marks of the lashes were on their backs; but the dogs howled an' foamed, an' tore at the horses, till the poor beasts took fright an' galloped like mad down the road, with the dogs behind howlin'

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an' barkin', an' the carriages after. The police of Athery heard o' the trouble, an' ran out with their guns to meet the funeral. They got between the dogs an' the hearse, an' fired a volley an' shot some o' thim. Thin the other dogs, whin they heard the noise o' the guns, jumped over the ditch an' ran across the field an' over Duggan's hill, an' were never seen again to this day, though ye can hear thim be night most any time howlin' around Crockett's house back at Bridgetown."

"Faith, that's a strange story, Tade, an' I never heard it before," said Mick Ahern.

"Yerra, I'm surprised. Sure I thought most everyone knew the story of Crockett's hounds," rejoined Tade.

"'Tis a bad thing to have anything to do with the priest, boys," mused John Conway, as he began to refill his pipe.

"Faix 'tis, except to go to your duties an' be respectful," added Tom Sheehan.

And then the whistle of the "Goods" train, bound for Limerick, screamed shrilly from down near Athery.

"By gor, there's half-past tin!" broke in Jackeen Hogan. "Let us get inside, boys, an' wake the good man that's gone, God rest him!"

They turned toward the house, out of which came the low murmur of many voices. Night had settled over the land. But through the dark one could see the flickering candles, with a crucifix between them, motionless kneeling figures, a dark shroud, and a white face.

## MAD MATT.

AT every season of the year, under torrid sun or drenching rain, "Mad Matt" Donaghue was to be seen on the main-travelled roads about Athery, Ardee, and Knockfeen. And so familiar was his odd figure to all the people, young and old, for miles and miles around, that not a lone child on the road would think of running away at the sight of him. It might be midwinter, with the wind blowing a gale across the country, and pelting the rain before it: just the same, Mad Matt braved the wind and the wet, and appeared as indifferent to the elements as if he were caressed by the zephyrs of a summer sea.

Perhaps he was sixty years of age,—certainly not more. His hair—which had never been cut, so far as anybody knew—was half gray and extended midway down his back. About his loins were gathered two or three doubles of canvas, which were held together by a belt of black leather. He was hatless and shoeless, and you might as well fling feathers against the wind as give head or foot wear to Mad Matt.

He walked on the right side of the road, his shoulders bent forward, his feet seeking the

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smooth places where broken stones were not scattered. "You'll be there, an' they'll be there, an' we'll be all there by an' by," he said to himself betimes as he went along. This sentence was followed by mutterings for some ten minutes. Then out of the incoherency this thought stood apart: "If Nell was here she'd know, but Nell is gone like the rest o' thim." Again incoherency; then finally: "Wisha, God help us, an' 'twas a sore night for all of us the night they came! An' they're gone now, an' we'll never be the same agin." So all along the road, day after day these phrases were audible. Between them were the lapses of incoherent muttering. Perhaps if those lapses could be filled up, if thought could be brought out of the disconnected words one might find a story.

There were certain families who always gave Matt shelter with the coming of night. When in the neighborhood of Knockfeen his haven of rest was the Condons "o' the Hill," so-called to distinguish them from several other families of the same name that lived in the neighborhood. He might happen in at five, six, seven, or eight o'clock. The hour made no difference; there was supper and a bed that night, and a breakfast before he left next morning. As he entered the yard one wild night, when the wind whisked around corners and the rain beat on the roofs of the houses, Mrs. Condon was hurrying from the dairy to the kitchen. She noticed Matt.

"Wisha, Annie," she called in to her daughter,

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who was sweeping back the ashes from before a blazing fire,—“wisha, Annie, here’s that anashore of a Matt. Hurry, child, an’ get him a cup o’ hot milk an’ some bread an’ butter, an’ whatever else you can find.”

Presently Matt was before the kitchen door, shaking the rain from his long hair.

“Yerra, poor man, get inside out o’ the rain an’ the wind, or you’ll get your death o’ could.”

Matt leaned over, pushed back the bolt of the half-door, and in a moment was sitting on the “hob” beside the cheerful fire. As the blaze leaped up and down, one could watch him under the play of light. His thin beard, which probably never in long years had felt the pressure of a comb, was, for all that, remarkably regular. His face, brown from exposure, was long and thin, and free from even a single wrinkle. His eyes, neither wild nor staring, gave the effect of gentleness and timidity to his expression. The height of his forehead was exaggerated by the long hair which was pushed back from it. Except for the occasional sentences and mutterings already mentioned, Matt never spoke; and when in people’s houses he refrained from even these. But he always understood when spoken to, and when advised to do anything not impossible or obviously foolish always obeyed. When Annie Condon said, “Now, Matt, take this hot milk and bread and butter and this piece of bacon,” he took them, nodded his head in thanks and ate. When Mrs. Condon said, a couple of hours later, “’Tis



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ten o'clock, Matt, an' you must be sleepy an' tired; you'd better go to bed, me poor man," Matt climbed up to the loft, back of the kitchen, and was soon fast asleep. He was up in the gray of the morning, took a piece of bread and a cup of sweet milk from anybody who happened to be around, and set out again on his life wandering.

Many tales were abroad to explain Matt's strange condition. Micky the Fenian said that in days gone by he stole an umbrella from the priest's side-car while the priest was giving the last Sacraments to a dying woman; and because the priest had to go home in the rain, Matt had to endure the wind and the wet with sparse clothing ever after.

"That's a yarn, Micky," Tade Clancy objected; "because why, I'll tell you. The punishment is too big for the sin, so it is; an' God doesn't work that way."

"Faix, if ye want to know the truth," said Johnny Mangan, "Matt Donaghue is mad because he married a Protestant from North Ireland in his young days, an' she coaxed his money away from him, an' thin left him without a hapurth in the world. Sure 'tis no wonder he's mad, boys!"

"Yerra, what are ye talkin' about, Mangan? Sure the man was never married any time," protested Tade Clancy. "If ye want to know the truth, I'll tell ye."

"By gor, that's no way to put by what honest min say, Tade Clancy." Johnny Mangan's

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feelings were hurt or he pretended they were.

"If ye want to know the story," Tade repeated, not heeding the interruption, "I'll tell ye. Mad Matt is a Wexford man, be all accounts. He lived in a farm out from the city of Wexford, with his two sisters. It was the time when the 'White Boys' wint around the county in the night, batin' an' killin' people they had a grudge agin. For some reason or other, they got a grudge agin poor Matt, an' they wint to his house one night an' rapped at the door. 'Who's that in God's name?' says Matt.—'Frinds that are droppin' in to visit ye,' says they.—'Frinds are always welcome to our house,' says Matt, openin' the door. The door was hardly open whin the divil a bit—God forgive me!—but six masked min broke down the half-door an' stood in the middle o' the kitchen. The two sisters started cryin' and screamin', an' ye never heard such a hulla-baloo in all yer life. They locked the two sisters in one o' the rooms, robbed the house, an' nearly bate the life out o' Matt before they left. The poor boy was found by the neighbors next mornin' lyin' on the floor, nearly half dead. An' while, after a few months, he recovered the health o' his body, he never recovered the health o' his mind. So he's Mad Matt to this day."

"Wisha, glory to God, an' I wonder if that's true?" said Mikeen Ahern.

"Yerra, do you suppose 'tis to make it up I would?" retorted Tade.

"Faix, it may an' it may not," Mrs. Clancy

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was pleased to remark in her practical way, as she added a couple of fresh sods of turf to the fire.

With the lapse of years Matt grew weaker, and in a little while his figure was seen no more on the white, winding roads. Many and many a woman offered him a place of rest, now that his wanderings were over.

"You will be no bother at all, poor man! An' you can have your bed up in the loft, an' a bit an' a sup whinever you want it," said one good woman, the mother of twelve children.

"Sure you can stay with us," another declared; "an' come an' go as you like."

But Mad Matt shook his head slowly, and pointed his lean finger to an old hut, abandoned long since, a short distance away from Creela graveyard.

"Yerra, is it loosin' your mind you are!" exclaimed Mrs. Sheehan, who was standing by at the time.

"Faix, it isn't; for he has lost it already," Mike Quinn's wife whispered.

To the hut went Matt, and lived alone, with the green fields around him, and heaven above. The grass grew up to the door, and the smell of the hay was in the house all summer. The bees, that sucked the sweets from the flowering clover below the tall spears, charged the air with slumber and dreams. At his door sat Matt, watching the great crop rise and fall like the sea when the wind came with gentle cooling from the south or west. Many a bird rose and

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hovered for a little over the nest where her young ones were songless in the soft grass; many a butterfly, with speckled wings, fluttered from flower to flower, gathering its toll. In the shady places of a shallow stream that flowed outside the hayfield, the cattle stood, their feet in the cool water, their heads under protecting branches. Upstream, where large stones were thrown to form a weir, the waters leaped and sang unceasingly.

"You'll be there, an' they'll be there, an' we'll be all there by an' by," murmured Matt, as he sat before the door, watching the face of the country. Children came and brought him something to eat, or an extra blanket to cover him in the cool of the evening. Matt never spoke, but his eyes showed gratitude.

Summer passed, and the leaves were changed to gold. Autumn passed, and the leaves were changed to brown. The blight of winter was on everything—grass, tree, shrub. A chill wind from the North brought the frost of a January night when the stars shone near together in a cloudless sky. Matt sat at his door, watching the heavens, and perhaps listening to the songs which poets tell us are sung by the stars. Feeling the chill air herself, Mrs. Sheehan thought of the "poor anashore" in the hut, and, accompanied by her son John, took him a warm blanket. She found him sitting at the door, watching the heavens.

"Here, Matt, go to bed now, and put this extra blanket over you."

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Matt's expression did not change.

"Do you listen, poor man? Go to bed now, an' don't be sittin' out here in the could."

She shook him gently by the shoulder. At her touch he fell over, face downward. "My God! John, lift him up! He's stunned with the could!"

Mother and son lifted the light body back on the chair. The eyes were open and still watching the heavens.

"O dear God, he's dead!" cried Mrs. Sheehan, as she touched the cold hand.

The neighbors came, and the body was prepared and placed on the couch where Mad Matt used to sleep. Next day one of the Poor Law Guardians was in favor of having the dead man laid away in the paupers' graveyard up near Ardee. But the people of Knockfeen thought otherwise.

"He was among us in life," spoke up Dan Sheehan, "an' we're goin' to have him among us in death."

And the neighbors echoed:

"That's talking, Dan!"

So Mad Matt was laid away in Creela graveyard, around which stretched the growing hayfields when the summer came back.



## THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL.

CURRAGH schoolhouse stood on the side of the road, with a "mortar-and-stone" wall surrounding it, to keep it sacred from contact with the working world. Inside the wall grew a well-trimmed hedge, which after some years concealed the masonry, that, to tell the truth was black from age and Irish rain.

Of a summer morning it was a sight to make the heart in you glad to see the children from north, south, east and west, walking to this centre of knowledge to get what the old people called "a bit o' schoolin'." The little girls, with their white bibs and calico dresses, and their hair held back by a blue band, looked askance at a stranger when he passed them by. The boys, with their caps and knickerbockers, sauntered along, some of them spinning tops, others committing to memory a lesson in grammar or geography.

James Sullivan was the "masther" of Curragh school, with the title of "First Class." Just what were the prerogatives and privileges of "First Class" as against second or third the boys and girls did not pretend to know. They understood,

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indeed, that first was better than second; but how much better--well, that belonged to the inspector.

It was late July and the inspector was making his annual visit. He always came before the summer vacation; and after his visit was over, the days of rest began. Along the roads and across the flowering fields the children went earlier than usual, just to get into school and be settled before the great man arrived. The girls wore their best dresses, and the boys their Sunday suits. The master himself had on the black coat and the grey trousers which he never wore on ordinary schooldays.

The children are coming in, with the flush of the morning on their faces and the dew of the fields on their boots. There is less of a buzz than usual; for they are hushed into silence by expectancy. Little Paddy Madigan, who is the brightest boy in third class, has a throbbing pulse lest he fail to pass up into fourth; Nance O'Neill is in fourth, and disgrace would rest on her name if she did not rise with honor into first stage of fifth. Danny Donovan is at the outer end of the seat. He is not very clever, finds it hard to learn, but he has gentle eyes and quiet manners; so everybody loves him, and hopes he will not be left behind. All are excited, anxious, hopeful.

James Sullivan was a man of twenty-eight, unmarried and alone in the world. His father and mother were both under the grass of the bleak graveyard back at Kilcappa hill; and he, their

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only child, was left lonesome and lonely, with only the memory of happier days. One does not wonder he loved the little boys and girls from the countryside around Curragh, whose young voices made music in his school all the long day. One does not wonder, either, that there was a weight in his heart that made his blood bound in his veins when he saw them pass out of his sight as the schoolday was over. Sorrow mellows men, makes them merciful, soft of speech, patient, and ready to hear a story of trouble or pain. Only success and visions of greatness lift the heads of men so high they can not see a tear in the eyes of the afflicted nor hear the cry of the lowly.

Sullivan knew all his little flock of scholars,—their talents, their innocence, their simplicity, their eagerness to satisfy, their leaping hearts for the least service. No wonder that these Irish country boys and girls, who had heard of the flogging schoolmasters in other districts, loved this man, who knew the power of sweetness and gentleness. Those hired slave-drivers, who felt that education must be beaten into children with a stick, had no conception of their divine mission—the opening of thought vistas to eager eyes. They had a mind to “salary” and the “results” after examinations.

At last the black side-car and handsome horse of the inspector were seen coming down over the Pike Hill road. The driver was on one seat, the inspector on the other. You could hear your

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heart beating if you listened, it was so still in the school. Then Mr. Sullivan, in the last few minutes that remained before the great man entered, walked to the front of the desks where the children were sitting, and simply said: "Children, you have studied hard, so do the best you can to-day. The examinations will be over about four o'clock. I want to see you all for a little while then, as this is the last day of school and vacation begins to-morrow." The children almost forgot to be afraid of the inspector, so surprised were they at the teacher's request. Presently the inspector entered. All stood up as a token of respect, were immediately seated again, and the great battle for promotion was on.

First comes the "infant class" in their ab-abs. Little Jimeen Sheehan spells h-o-u-s-e, and Maggie Noonan spells s-c-h-o-o-l, but Tommy Duggan spells "road" r-o-d-e. Then he blushes, hesitates, and finally, as the inspector points his index finger at the next in the circle, shouts "r-o-a-d!" He has caught fleeing Opportunity by her single lock and is saved. Meantime boys and girls in the sixth class are working problems from blue cards which the inspector has brought along; those in the fifth are writing a letter to an imaginary Aunt Elizabeth in Dublin, telling her about an imaginary bazaar in an imaginary place called Brexwell. The third and fourth classes are giving examples of penmanship in as finished a hand as their nerves will allow. Young Danny

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Kennedy overloads his pen with ink, and begins to circle the curve of a beautiful *C*. After all, a pen is a pen, and long before the *C* is circled its lovely outlines are blurred with a black spot "as big as a ha'penny." Mollie Hogan, who sits next him, laughs stealthily at his misfortune, which makes Danny promise a measure of revenge, you may be sure.

Then the first class undergoes its oral test, and the second and the third. Like a pyramid turned upside-down, the higher the class the longer it takes to circle its variety of subjects. Spelling and reading; spelling, reading, and arithmetic; spelling, reading, arithmetic, and geography; spelling, reading, arithmetic, geography, and grammar; spelling, reading, arithmetic, geography, grammar, and agriculture. And so on, bigger and bigger like the house that Jack built.

As the day reaches far into the afternoon, those out on the field who were examined in the morning have grown weary of their play. The higher classes undergoing their oral tests are weary also,—weary of the long, anxious wait, of the monotonous hum of voices, of the endless changing and marching back and forth.

At last the tests are over. The inspector, with Mr. Sullivan's assistance, gathers up his array of papers, records, cards, and what not. He locks them away in his satchel, bids the Curragh schoolteacher a perfunctory good-bye, mounts his side-car, and soon you can hear the wheels rolling over the broken stones as his horse speeds along.



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Then the children, tired of the long day and anxious for the welcome sight of home, re-enter the school. The teacher stops a little rosy-faced chap of six and asks:

"What's your name?"

"Dan McCann, an' an Irishman," answers the little fellow, saluting.

Then he asks a red-haired miss of seven:

"And what's your name?"

"Rosaleen, the Irish queen," she answers, with a courtesy. These are the catchwords the schoolteacher has taught them; and as he hears them now, somehow, instead of the smile with which he has been accustomed to greet these younger children, his face is serious.

When they are all seated, he walks to the front of the desks where he stood at the beginning of the day. The children are quiet and anxious. They forget about home and vacation. The teacher surveys his scholars for a little, and then speaks softly, for his voice is heavy with feeling:

"Children, I won't delay you long. I wouldn't keep you waiting at all only I am anxious to have these few minutes alone with you before you go home. Your examinations are over now, and the vacation is beginning. You have kept at your books this year—most of you have,—and I know you will be promoted to higher classes. There may be two or three failures, but that does not matter. We can not expect all to go up. You will have a very happy vacation, I know. You

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will be back at home and free. Do not play all the time, however; for as we vary our working time with play, so we must vary our playing time with work. Be good, just like all our simple people around,—not only now when you are young, but later on when you are older. Try always to remember your race, and to be proud of it and to do it honor. We come of kings and warriors and bards and orators and saints; hence the hearts in us should be warm to music and to battle and to prayer. Some of you will be going to America, maybe, later on. You may get rich and mighty, and you may have the world smiling at your feet some day. But you must never, never forget your Irish faith, your Irish love for this island home of ours, nor your love for your own people, no matter how poor.

“I am taking so much time, children, because it will be long before I see you again, if ever.” (Then the eyes of his child audience grew large with wonder.) “You have always been such good children—gentle, truthful, respectful,—that I feel lonesome to leave you,—just as if you were my very own. But, you see, all my people are away under the earth; and, as I want a change in order to see the world and earn a better living, I have made up my mind to go to America this summer—”

“Yes, but you will be back in August, sir!” interrupted Danny Hogan, forgetting his manners in his fright over the terrible news.

“No, not in August—not in August,” echoed the teacher, sadly. [ 214 ]

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Nothing quickens tears in the eyes of a good man like tears in the eyes of a child. So when Kitty Shanahan and Maura Sheedy and Jimeen Hogan and Paddy Clancy cried silently for the going of this kindly, humane teacher, and when so many of big as well as little without distinction were caught by the contagion, 'tis small wonder the heart of this strong man gave way and that his eyes were glistening with tears. After all, child love is the least selfish. So little fills the heart of a child, yet it gives back so much in return! Sullivan knew this. He knew that all he had ever given those friends of his was a kind word here and there,—a little of the honey of encouragement. Yet how large a love they were giving back to him!

“And now, children,” he finished with a heavy voice, “May God be good to you and to this dear island of ours! And may He be kind and merciful to me when I am away among strangers in a lonely land! Pray for me, who will not see you again as little ones with your blue Irish eyes and with your true Irish hearts. God bless you!—God bless you! Good-bye, Maura; and you, Mollie and Jimeen and Ted; and you, little Maurice and Rosaleen; and you, Jim.”

So to each one passing out he gave his strong hand that circled the child hand in its warm clasp. Then came the baby of the school, Mollie Anne. Into his arms he took the little one, stroked, with a hand that was never lifted but in love, the black hair, and whispered in a broken

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voice: "Good-bye, good-bye, Mollie Anne! You're the best baby girl in all Ireland." The little head nodded wearily, for the day had been long and sleepless. Then he touched the little white forehead with his lips, and presently she joined the other children.

For a long time he looked from the school door at the group that broke away into little streams and went slowly homeward to the north, south, east, and west. He had the mood that weights the heart with feeling, and then finds its escape in song. The years of quiet were ended; the lowly lives of little children that flooded his darkest days with stray sunlight and made song that could be heard beneath the rolling of winds—they were all gone, gone out of his life. The passion had caught him. The cry of the West to brave the ocean and find possessions in the New World had lured him like a siren. The longing for a wonder world, for romance, for daring and doing, had beaten at the door of his gentle soul. Yes, he must go. The eager, impulsive, imaginative, carefree Celt has caught the fever. Sorry or not, he must go.

And the children, far down the fields or away on the white road, move slowly; for their hearts feel the pain of the parting. What to them is vacation now, when their hero is leaving! What to them freedom from books when the kindest face they have ever known will not smile them a welcome when they return in the waning summer! The smoke from the chimneys of their

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homes, which they see rising far down the valley, would be a sign of welcome in other years: now it is the form of one they love fading away. James Sullivan from the door sees the last of them passing over the hill or turning the bend of the road. He thinks they look back to wave him adieu, and he waves in return.

“The sweetest faces and the whitest souls that God ever blessed the world with are you! You will grow tall and fair, and the land that should be yours belongs to a stranger, and your birthright is stolen and your riches are wasted, while you are left desolate. God help me! The voice is calling me, and I am following,—I who have been so happy here, in sun and rain, in Autumn and Spring! That’s the last of them. They have turned the road bend; they have gone over the hill. And I am leaving them and following the voice, with my face to the West.”



## THE ATHERY MEETING.

THE Athery meeting\* had been placarded for weeks before. You read of it at the chapel gates, on the telegraph poles along the roads, outside the post office at Cronin's mill, at Madigan's forge; and for three weeks ahead Jacky the Bellman had been announcing it at all the fairs. Hence the event took on a measure of importance, surpassing anything of a like character for years before.

In Ireland, they say that it always rains at the meeting. But never a drop fell on Athery that day, nor for two days before, nor for two after. There were only a few white clouds all over the face of the heavens; a soft breeze blew in from the Shannon and up the Deel, which tempered the heat of the July sun. Insects hummed in drowsy fashion out among the flowering weeds

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\* In Ireland the word "meeting" implies an assemblage of people that gather for some patriotic purpose. First, there is usually a procession or parade, followed by considerable oratory from Members of Parliament of more or less prominence, depending on the importance of the occasion. Sometimes an attorney or a priest adds his voice to sway the multitude.

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that grew among the rushes where the soil was black and moist.

The procession formed back at the chapel gates and began to march shortly after last Mass. Every parish for miles around was represented by a banner and a number of marching men. The banners were of various designs and resplendent with manifold inscriptions. Generally there were two upright poles surmounted by a transverse bar, from which was suspended the banner proper. The inscriptions were done in gold on a background of green. As the men marched, holding the poles, you could get the gist of the sentiment. Shanagolden banner bore the slogan, "The Land for the People"; Creela proclaimed the truth, "For God and Country"; Nenagh, "God Save Ireland"; Ballydee, "Ireland is Worth Dying For." Knockfeen was glorified by a demand expressed in numbers:

We want the land that bore us,  
Which our Fathers had before us;  
Then together stand  
For our native land,  
With heaven shining o'er us.

And so they marched, the men of Ardee with the Ardee hurling club, wearing green jerseys and caps, and each player bearing his hurly on his shoulder. The Garryown brass band was moving in single footfall, playing "O'Donnell Aboo." Then the blood surged through your veins and you longed for a gun. The Kilmeedy men came, three hundred strong; tall, large-

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boned men they were, who looked ahead like soldiers. The fife-and-drum band, made up of schoolboys of the "Monks' School" at Adare, whistled by to the tune of "God Save Ireland," and received an ovation. Old and New Kildimo, always factious in the past, joined hands in love on the great day, and carried a sign bearing the inscription "United we Stand."

And so they marched on and on,—the men from the West who labored in the bog fields, the men from the South who labored at the hay, the men from the East who kept the stock and the dairies, the men from the North who tilled the land; old men with the fire of the long-ago still leaping up in their eyes, as the music stirred the strings of memory; middle-aged men, with wives and big families left behind in some quiet country home. Their faces were tanned by the sun and their hands rough from the plow and the spade and the scythe. But they were brave men, not afraid of danger with a spice of romance to it; nor fearful of war. The young men moved along, conscious that the eyes of many were upon them, and proud of their quick, firm steps hitting the road at the same instant. They might be descendants of the Gallowglasses, for all one knew. And if you stood there and watched them, blue-eyed and dark-haired like the Milesians who sailed down the Atlantic in search of Innisfail, you would know that God never meant they should be serfs.

Wendell Phillips is reported to have said on

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one occasion, before a Toronto audience of Orangemen, that the Union Jack is the only flag that never waved above a slave. If one quibbles about a term, it is possible the statement is sufficiently true to work up a climax in order to win the applause of Toronto Orangemen. But in spirit and truth it is as false as many another large statement that has worked its way into the minds of men. Landlordism and pauperism and privation of education that for so long was England's policy in handling the Irish Question created a slavery in fact, if not in name. And even on that Sunday, in the late Eighties, one felt the marching men of every age and condition were, somehow, the slaves of a blundering government, that could not or would not see the light even when the whole world cried out, "Lo, it is here!"

On a large field outside the town, the marching men came to a halt. A platform was constructed some seventy yards in from the road, in front of which the people gathered to hear the orators who had come from near and far. As each division entered, those who bore the banner made it secure to the side of the platform, where it waved in the soft summer breeze.

One does not remember, over the reach of years, the political sapience that enlightened the listening throngs that day. The eloquent appeals that brought back the "hear, hear!" and "loud and prolonged cheering," and the "great applause," no longer stand large and apart above the un-

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eventful things of the past. But Micky the Fenian was there, and frequently interrupted the Member of Parliament from County Wexford. Once, however, when that worthy man declared, uplifting his right hand, "Fellow-countrymen, our faces are set in the right direction," Micky interrupted, "By gor, yours isn't, anyhow, or I'd hear what you're sayin' better!" This seemed a discourtesy in the opinion of those immediate to Micky; hence he was greeted with reminders like, "Whist!"—"Yerra, can't you keep your tongue quiet a while, anyhow?" All which had a chastening effect on Micky, you may be sure; for, like men in general, when his wit met with disapproval it cooled quickly.

As the shadows of the afternoon lengthened, the crowd grew weary of standing and listening. After all, many of those who came had a long distance to travel before they would reach home. The last speaker but one had finished, and a relieving cheer rent the heavens. The final speaker was not formally announced, hence the people were curious. They were told he would be brief, and you may be sure this caused a great uplifting of hearts.

"Yerra, who is it?" asked Jim Donnelly of Johnny Mangán, who stood near.

"You tell me an' I'll tell you,—without giving you a short answer," Johnny replied, straining his neck to see over the shoulder of the man before him.

Then he appeared,—white-haired and smooth-



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faced, holding his tall hat in his left hand, a patriot if ever there was one—the gentle Father Tracey himself. “Father Tracey! Father Tracey!” shouted some one. Then, to use an elaborate Homeric figure, even as a west wind gathers up one wave that quickens all the sea till billows break to landward, so thousands of tongues took up the name so well known, so well loved and made of it a battle cry, a song, a phrase to conjure by. What now were Members of Parliament from Dublin, Wexford, and Kilkenny! What were “anashoreens” of barristers who wore wigs in the court-rooms! What were Poor Law Guardians, with their weekly Unions up at Ardee or back at Newcastle! What were solicitors, with their smart talk about being “amenable to the law” for this or for that! What were they all, with their fine dress and smart talk, beside this white-haired, smooth-faced man, anointed of God, with the glory of seventy years mounting fast upon him! He stood still and silent while the thousands cheered and cheered, and waved hats, handkerchiefs, and flags, till from the hills west of the Deel River over and over again came back the echoes. Then Father Tracey reached out his hand, palm down, over the crowd; and in a little while silence settled, and faces were lifted in listening attitude.

“My dear people,” the priest began very quietly and without any flourish, “the good men who have charge of this meeting asked me to say

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a word to you before you go home. I know you'll be glad to go when I'm finished."

A ripple of laughter quickened here, and it reached to every face when Father Tracey added:

"For up at Knockfeen they sometimes go before I'm through at all. You have noticed there are no policemen or soldiers here to-day [great cheering] excepting myself [a veritable storm]. It is said by our enemies that we are a lawless people, an intemperate people. But there has been no fight here to-day. [The priest paused and looked around.] And I do not see a single drunken man. That makes the heart in me glad, and gladdens the heart of any man who loves Ireland. My people—for you are all mine in a sense,—I love you when you are sober, and I weep for you when you are not. Thank God, Ireland to-day is a sober Ireland; and—for I see the signs everywhere—to-morrow, with the guidance of His blessed light, Ireland will be a free Ireland. My people, the day is coming to an end. The sun is going down in the West, and soon the stars will appear in the sky. Many of you have come from a distance and have a long journey before you. Go home sober, each and all of you, to your wives and children that wait for you at the half-door, to see if you are coming with a high head and a steady step through the falling night. They'll see you straight and strong and sober, won't they?"

"They will, your Reverence,—they will! [Great cheering.]"

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"Thank you! God bless you, and take you safe home!"

The ending was so sweet, so solemn, so gentle, the people paid the tribute of breathless silence. Then the men on the stand walked down the steps and out to the road. Those who had charge of the banners took them down, folded them and bore them away. The bands played "Garryown" and "Wearin' o' the Green" and "God Save Ireland," while those about the stand broke and parted. Soon the vast field was deserted, and only the trampled grass and the empty stand, and the green bunting that fluttered in the wind of the waning day, told the story of the cheering thousands.

Now the people have eaten at the homes of friends or at some restaurant, or have stilled the pangs of hunger with the lunches they have brought. They are going through the quiet evening to their homes,—the men from the West who labor in the bog fields, the men from the South who labor at the hay, the men from the East who keep the stock and the dairies, the men from the North who till the land. They are sober and thoughtful, their eyes straight ahead. In their quick Celtic fancies they see young wives and children waiting to hear the news of the "meeting"; in their memories they hear a voice that is low and sweet—"Thank you! God bless you, and take you safe home!"

## THE AFTER YEARS.

**D**AWN breaking on Queenstown harbor. Four Irish girls, come home from America to spend Christmas in the old land, are wiping the tears away at the sight of the familiar city spread out along the hill. The paperman comes up with the *Cork Examiner*, and has no change for a sixpence. Sixpence, a mere trifle,—what is change to you? Still it makes you moralize, if you are of the land. You say to yourself: Many a tourist thinks that the paperman with his mean whine about no change, and the lacewoman with her run of talk that tires, and the jarvey with his hand always reaching out, are typical of the race: that these express the hospitality and the warmth and the heart of the people. But of course 'tis otherwise; for the paperman and the lacewoman and the jarvey are mean money-getters as foreign to Ireland as is the travelling Jew or gypsy. But how can the hurrying tourist know, who sees all Ireland from one peep at Queenstown or Dublin?

On the way to Cork there is a lad of fifteen in the train with his strap full of books. He is smooth-faced, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and probably

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will hold up his end of a conversation. He talks very well, you find; he is going to a college in Cork; studies Latin, trigonometry, Irish history, Roman history, and so on. You bid him good-bye at Cork station, and the train passes out near the neighborhood of Blarney Castle. Blarney has won a certain notoriety beyond other Irish antiquities; but there are a dozen or so castles vastly more interesting, more crowded with memories of daring deeds than this popular pile out from the city on the Lee. On either side along the way are prosperous-looking towns, and around them rich grazing lands, on which fat cattle are browsing in shady places.

Down at Limerick Junction a train is waiting for your train to pull out. During the wait one porter calls out, "Tickets!" and another follows and punches holes in them. An old woman standing on the platform asks in a high pitch:

"Porther, is that other thrain for Caherfin?"

"Yerra, woman, can't you see I'm in a hurry?" responds the "porther," ceasing to punch.

"Faix, thin, you might answer a civil question with a civil answer, at any rate."

"Don't I tell you I'm in a hurry, woman, to let the thrain go?" The porter, however, doesn't seem to be especially hurried.

"Well, I want to go to Caherfin."

"Yerra, go! I'm not houldin' you."

"Well, but where is the thrain?"

"There it is, over there."

"Will I walk into it now or will I wait?"



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"Well, if you walk into it now, it won't go away without you, at any rate."

By this time everybody is convulsed with laughter over the ridiculous situation in which the porter who clamors about his time has still so much of it to waste.

"Wisha, the divil carry you an' your ould guff!" the old woman calls after him as the train pulls out.

Then on to the city of Limerick, which the Danes held once and where Danish names still survive; where William of Orange met his repulses, and where the name of Sarsfield shines with special brilliance. These are all dead glories, however, that only quicken regrets for what might have been. One likes to dream when the dream does not vanish with a sharp pain. And whoever dreams of historic Ireland as distinct from Ireland of the hearth and the people, must feel conscious at every turn that everything might have been different if something had not happened. But the something always happened, and therefore the sad sequel.

If Brian of the Tribute had not been killed by his enemies on the night after the battle of Clontarf, a settled government might have followed, and who knows but Irish rulers might still be ruling a free land from the historic fortress of Kincora? If jealousy and wounded pride had not poisoned the red blood of Dermott MacMurrough till he became a black traitor, there would not have been any Norman invasion, perhaps; and if

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before the invading hosts had become a dark shadow on the landscape, the native chiefs could have presented an unbroken front—instead of spending their strength on one another,—there might have been no Norman Castle, no English pale. If spies had not tracked the men of Ninety-Eight, and if the leaders had not been arrested, and if Dublin had not been under martial law, things might have been so different. If Emmet's dream had come true, he might even now be honored by another title than that of martyr; and if Parnell, that master of strategy in the war of peace, had not slipped when the day was almost won, the nineteenth century in the history of Ireland need not, very possibly, have been shelved away with the might-have-been centuries of the past. And one wonders if, even now, when the dawn is so red with promise, something may not happen to turn the face of Mother Erin back to the old days, dark as night and cheerless as death. One hopes not; but disappointment in the fruition of the hope for so long, quickens the doubt.

Athery is the same dreaming town into which the turf and the seaweed come with the early morning or at midday or in the still evening. The abbey is on the hill, and from one of its narrow windows you can follow with your eye the river that widens until its waters are lost in the historic Shannon that comes from afar. Slantwise, on the other side, is the "Hill o' Dreams"; but the cottage below it is there no longer. Where it

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stood a tree nods in the soft wind. One wonders where is Tim Hogan. It is better not to ask; for the answer will surely come like an echo: "He is dead and gone." And his little girl of dreams? Perhaps in America; if so, her dreams are no more. Let us not ask; for surely this is an instance of "ignorance is bliss." The blind man's grave has its cross and its inscription,—his modest hold on immortality.

The day is waning and the children are passing down the street on their way from school. The boys still carry their books in a strap, and the girls carry the lunch in a bag or a basket. Upon the bridge they stand for a little to watch the tide steal in. The breath of the sea comes and is sweet to their sense. Many chatter about the boat that belongs to the Macks, and carries more turf than any two others; or about Jimeen Connell's "cot" that ran aground ere yesterday. Some are silent and with wide eyes watch the gulls, the ships of the air, sailing far out. The little village is, in essentials, unchanged and unchanging. Better houses to live in, more education, more of the comforts and refinements of life,—yes, by all means. But the religion of the race, and its spirit of reverence, and its love for the supernatural, and its wit and quick fancy and its sympathy, and its wide range of sentiment,—these must endure, else the race, as we know it, passes out.

You drive along the white road from Athery to Ardee, and the endless procession still moves

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on. But the feet of some you have known who walked over it many and many the time are laid away in dust and will never walk over it again. You miss them and the familiar "God bless you!" Then you drift into dreamland, and forget the jarvey and his white pony, and the houses set in among the fields on either side of you. You think of old Micky the Fenian and his bad hump and his good eye and his hasty temper and his terrible tales. You think of fun and laughter, and wit and repartee. Then Micky vanishes, and Dan Madigan's life and its sudden ending pass before you. You wonder if Kathleen O'Donnell is still at the Good Shepherd convent. But you do not ask, lest the echo come: "She is dead and gone." Mary Connelly? Yes, you remember of her going. The echo came to you somehow, somewhere. Then young Danny O'Neill, now asleep under the high heavens of far-away Texas, glides past you and vanishes. His gentle sister, secluded with silence and eternity in the cloister, floats before you, too. You are going to ask how she is bearing the sorrow of her brother's going, but you fear the echo may return, "Dead and gone!" To the south are the crossroads, and you notice the road running east and west. To the east is the stony land where the sheep and goats are feeding as of old; to the west, the Furness estate and the interlocking trees and the "Bridge o' the Ghosts."

Presently you come back to life with a jerk: the jarvey reins his horse suddenly before the gate

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of Knockfeen chapel, where you told him to drive. You put away your dream for the moment and enter the chapel yard through the iron gate. There is a mellow setting sun and a cooling wind. The grass is soft over Father Tracey's grave. The place is very quiet, symbolic of the life of the man. One looks for the familiar figure as if he must always be; but the familiar figure comes no more. Yes, it is sweet for him to be home with God. The little chapel is quiet within. The red light keeps vigil and an old lady far back in one of the side aisles keeps vigil also. The heart is quickened to prayer there. It is so still one can hear the whisper of God. Pealing bells, throbbing organs, the roll of voices, ministers and splendor of vestments, and the infinite detail of ceremonial, are a tribute to the King. Let the tribute be sent up again and again. Yet there is a joy in hearing whispers in the silence. Once an old Irishwoman said, when her married daughters took her to a Pontifical High Mass in one of our large American cities: "I like the grand music an' the bishop an' all the priests. But over in Ireland we have a Low Mass, an' 'tis quiet like; an' you can say your prayers betther, an' you can hear what God says; for there's no organ an' no singin' to drown out His voice."

You spend your time in the haunts you know and love; and each haunt quickens a memory of a joy or a sorrow, or a memory in which both commingle. When at last the time comes to



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bid them good-bye, you will bear away with you the conviction, heretofore mentioned, that Ireland does not change. The old castles with their narrow windows, the abbeys to which the ivy clings tenaciously, still stand and point to the past. The little towns, their houses roofed with slate or thatch, do not often grow larger. The old people die out with their hands clinging fast to the gate of heaven, while the young grow up and follow in their ways.

Many who talk of an "awakening" mean not merely the dawn of industry and a wider education and land-ownership and prosperity: more often they mean the dawn of revolt against the old ideals, against the old faith, against the old morality, against the old enduring patience and the old reverence. The true dawn is breaking even now. It needs no seer to tell that the long night of landlordism is past, that the land of Ireland is fast coming to its rightful owners. Nor does it need a seer to tell you that Ireland's national school system does not suffer by comparison with the public school system of the United States; and when the Irish Catholic University has grown richer and riper, the day of the Trinity College man, with his English ideas and his Tory point of view, will pass away.

May this true dawn come sure and swift! The world will welcome it. But no real lover of Ireland and her history and her purposes will welcome the other dawn with eager eyes. Much as one's heart aches for the true dawn, any one who

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loves Ireland deeply and tenderly will pray that the east may never be red with the streaks of a new day, if the clouds of doubt and infidelity hide the dear, familiar sky of the Ireland we know.

















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